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Contents

Personaggi e Paesaggio ne <u>I Malavoglia</u> di Verga	A. Michael De Luca . 1
The Influence of Tolstoy Upon Roger Martin du Gard	Martha O'Nan . 7
Arturo Mejía Nieto: Story-teller from Honduras	J. Riis Owre . 15
<u>Scivias</u> and the Burial Scene in <u>Faust II</u>	George W. Radimersky . 31
Translations of the Twenty-third Psalm	William I. Schreiber . 42
Recent Books in the Field of Classical Languages and Literature	50
Books Received	55

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PERSONAGGI E PAESAGGIO NE I MALAVOGLIA DI VERGA

By A. Michael De Luca, Hofstra College

Nel 1880 Giovanni Verga diede alla luce Vita dei campi, una collezione di novelle in cui l'autore tenta la rappresentazione dell'umanità barbarica e istintiva. La prima di esse in ordine cronologico e la più rinomata, anche ai non-letterati, è Cavalleria rusticana. L'anno dopo il Verga lascia il mondo primitivo e selvaggio di questa collezione e avvia la sua arte, con I Malavoglia, verso il mondo sociale degli umili.

I Malavoglia sono la storia di una povera famiglia siciliana. Il nonno, padron 'Ntoni, ne è al centro, e ne rappresenta i sentimenti sacri di fedeltà alla famiglia, alla casa, all'onestà, ai gusti semplici. La famiglia lotta contro la povertà, contro le tribolazioni comuni di questa gente misera incoraggiata dal capo. Ma un nipote, il giovane 'Ntoni, si scoraggia delle avversità continue e sogna l'agiatazza. Allettato da questo miraggio, si allontana, ma si perde nel vizio. Ritorna allora alla sua casa, ma non se ne sente degno e si allontana per sempre.

Intorno ai protagonisti è raccolta tutta la vita del paese -- Aci Trezza -- con i suoi sentimenti e i suoi interessi. I paesani di Aci Trezza rappresentano le reazioni destinate dalle vicende dei Malavoglia, cioè ognuno dei personaggi secondari è veduto alla luce dei particolari avvenimenti e sentimenti dei Malavoglia, ed entra, o per ragioni d'interesse, o per ragioni di sentimento, nella storia dei protagonisti. Da questo punto di vista I Malavoglia sono superiori al romanzo che diede al Verga fama universale, Maestro don Gesualdo, che manca di unità perchè i personaggi secondari di questo non sono in funzione dei protagonisti.

Può servire di esempio tutto il capitolo terzo de I Malavoglia magistralmente orchestrato intorno al motivo di una burrasca, scatenatasi una domenica di settembre, che farà naufragare la Provvidenza, barca dei Malavoglia carica di lupini, e rovinerà la famiglia. Tutte le chiacchiere sparse del paese sono dirette verso questo motivo, e sono tenute insieme dall'aria di burrasca che circola in tutto il capitolo e fa una cosa sola, un solo motivo poetico del paese, dei protagonisti e dei compaesani. Citiamo la conversazione che ha luogo in chiesa fra alcuni compaesani quella triste domenica:

--Ci sono i diavoli per aria! -- diceva la Santuzza facendosi la croce coll'acqua santa. --Una giornata da far peccati!
--Volete che ve la dica? --saltò su la Vespa;-- la vera disgrazia è toccata allo zio Crocifisso che ha dato i lupini a

credenza. "Chi fa credenza senza pegno, perde l'amico, la roba e l'ingegno"

--Al giorno d'oggi, --disse padron Cipolla, stringendosi nelle spalle, --nessuno è contento del suo stato e vuol pigliare il cielo a pugni.

--Il fatto è -- concluse compare Zuppiddo -- che sarà una brutta giornata pei Malavoglia.

--Per me, --aggiunse Piedipapera, -- non vorrei trovarmi nella camicia di compare Bastianazzo /Malavoglia/.

La sera scese triste e fredda; di tanto in tanto soffiava un buffo di tramontana, e faceva piovere una spruzzatina d'acqua fina e cheta: una di quelle sere in cui, quando si ha la barca al sicuro, colla pancia all'asciutto sulla sabbia, si gode a vedersi fumare la pentola dinanzi, col marmocchio fra le gambe, e sentire le ciabatte della donna per la casa, dietro le spalle. I fannulloni preferivano godersi all'osteria quella domenica che prometteva di durare anche il lunedì¹

Bisogna notare un carattere particolare di questa folla che costituisce lo sfondo essenziale di questo romanzo. Folla di sfondo c'è anche in altri romanzi di altri autori. Per esempio in quelli del Fogazzaro: ma costituisce nel caso di questo autore un elemento artistico di secondo ordine, perchè il Fogazzaro è uno spirito aristocratico che non si immedesima con i personaggi secondari e li ritrae con un sorriso canzonatorio che abbassa alquanto il tono del suo romanzo. Questo non accade ne I Malavoglia. La vita pettegola e piccina del paese è ritratta dal Verga con un' oggettività che il Fogazzaro e anche il Fucini e il De Amicis, per citare contemporanei suoi, ignorano. E non è veramente giusto chiamare quella vita pettegola e piccina perchè il Verga la ritrae con una serietà morale e artistica che non si riscontra nel Fogazzaro o nel Fucini o nel De Amicis, per i quali essa è oggetto di più o meno facile caricatura. La regione per questo è ben chiara perchè questi sono scrittori borghesi; il Verga no.

A questo proposito bisogna osservare che in Mastro don Gesualdo, pubblicato otto anni dopo I Malavoglia, alcuni motivi umili daranno origine alla caricatura, non però di tipo dozzinale come in qualche pagina del Fucini. Il tono di Mastro don Gesualdo è quello dello scrittore staccato dall'ambiente, che guarda l'ambiente dall'alto. Questa osservazione però, vale a proposito dei compaesani di Mastro don Gesualdo, non a proposito del protagonista ed alcuni altri personaggi principali con cui il Verga si immedesima. Ci sono infatti in Mastro don Gesualdo due sfere nettamente distinte; una di carattere elevato aristocratico o etico, ed una che rappresenta la vita minuta, piccina, pettegola in cui vive il protagonista. Questa folla attira la curiosità del Verga e costituisce uno spasso per lui. Questi personaggi sono riusciti bene, ma rappresentano un tipo di arte diverso da quello degli altri personaggi dello stesso romanzo e della folla de I Malavoglia.

All' unità poetica de I Malavoglia contribuisce anche il paesaggio; il quale non è un paesaggio letterario ma domestico, colorito anch'esso dalle passioni e dalle abitudini dei paesani. Questo paesaggio è limitato alla linea del paese, e si può dire non è distinguibile nè dai paesani nè dal paese stesso. Nel capitolo secondo è notevole la funzione del paesaggio. L'inizio e la chiusa del capitolo sono costituite dal paesaggio che sembra di servire da cornice ad una interminabile scena di chiacchiere dei paesani che stanno per addormentarsi. Questa cornice di paesaggio dà al capitolo una qualità lirica che ci rivela un Verga un po' meno oggettivo di quel che credeva di essere. Il lirismo che scorgiamo certamente è quello semplice delle cose di tutti i giorni.² Lo stesso tipo di paesaggio è nella descrizione dell' alba di questo paese marinaro che si trova nel capitolo sesto. Eccone un brano:

Il nonno colla lanterna andava e veniva pel cortile; fuori si udiva passare la gente che andava al mare, e passava a picchiare di porta in porta, per chiamare i compagni. Però, come giunsero sul lido, davanti al mare nero, dove si specchiavano le stelle, e si vedevano qua e là le lanterne delle altre barche, anche 'Ntoni si sentì allargare il cuore.³

Così è anche la descrizione della primavera, al capitolo ottavo:

La Pasqua infatti era vicina. Le colline erano tornate a vestirsi di verde, e i fichidindia erano di nuovo in fiore. Le ragazze avevano seminato il basilico alla finestra, e ci si venivano a posare le farfalle bianche; fin le povere ginestre della sciara avevano il loro fiorellino pallido. La mattina, sui tetti, fumavano le tegole verdi e gialle, e i passeri vi facevano gazzarra sino al tramonto.⁴

Qui il paesaggio, che aderisce così bene al dramma dei Malavoglia e dei loro umili compaesani e che ha l'aspetto povero e dolente di quella povera gente, ha una nota particolare tutto suo. Sembra di essere il conforto della miseria di quei personaggi. In esso sembrano di confondersi le loro pene come se fosse il Gran Tutto. Così il paesaggio acquista una qualità musicale di canto triste ma armonioso. Osserviamo questa qualità anche in un brano del capitolo settimo:

Intanto la Provvidenza era scivolata in mare come un'anitra, col becco in aria, e ci sguazzava dentro, si godeva il fresco, dondolandosi mollemente nell'acqua verde, che le colpettava attorno ai fianchi, e il sole le ballava sulla vernice. Padron 'Ntoni, se la godeva anche lui, colle mani dietro la schiena e le gambe aperte, aggrottando un po' le ciglia, come fanno i marinai quando vogliono vederci bene anche al sole, che era un

bel sole d'inverno, e i campi erano verdi, il mare lucente, e il cielo turchino che non finiva mai. Così tornano il bel sole e le dolci mattine d'inverno anche per gli occhi che hanno pianto, e li hanno visti del color della pece; e ogni cosa si rinnova come la Provvidenza, che era bastata un po' di pece e di colore, e quattro pezzi di legno, per farla tornare nuova come prima, e chi non vede più nulla sono gli occhi che non piangono più, e sono chiusi dalla morte.⁵

Questa caratteristica si osserva soprattutto nella chiusa nostalgica e lirica del romanzo. Il giovane 'Ntoni ritorna alla sua casa ma riparte quasi subito perchè nel paese, di cui non è più degno, non ci può stare:

E se ne andò colla sua sporta sotto il braccio; poi, quando fu lontano, in mezzo alla piazza scura e deserta, che tutti gli uscì erano chiusi, si ferma ad ascoltare se chiudessero la porta della casa del nespolo, mentre il cane gli abbaiava dietro, e gli diceva col suo abbaiare che era solo in mezzo al paese

Sulla riva, in fondo alla piazza, cominciavano a formicolare dei lumi. Egli levò il capo a guardare i Tre Re che luccicavano, e la Puddara che annunciava l'alba, come l'aveva vista tante volte. Allora tornò a chinare il capo sul petto, a pensare a tutta la sua storia. A poco a poco il mare cominciò a farsi bianco, e i Tre Re ad impallidire, e le case spuntavano ad una nelle vie scure, cogli uscì chiusi, che si conoscevano tutte⁶

Si è parlato di paesaggio, ma si sarebbe dovuto parlare della patria dei Malavoglia come la intendevano essi; cioè Aci Trezza, il suo cielo, il suo mare, il suolo, la casa. Fissando l'attenzione sul cielo, sul mare, sul paese e sulla casa a cui sono attaccati i veri sentimenti dei personaggi, noi la fissiamo sui personaggi stessi. Questo motivo ce l'ha indicato il Verga stesso nello scritto Fantasticherie in cui dava qualche indizio della sua poetica ne I Malavoglia. In esso parlava del

tenace attaccamento di quella povera gente allo scoglio sul quale la fortuna li ha lasciati cadere questa religione della famiglia che si riverbera sul mestiere sulla casa e sui sassi che la circondano.⁷

Ne I Malavoglia c'è, infatti, un sentimento religioso, cioè un sentimento di moralità, di onestà, di attaccamento alle abitudini, al paese, e alla casa del nespolo, simbolo e rifugio degli affetti e delle tribolazioni della famiglia. Religiosa è anche la tenerezza con cui il Verga descrive

il luogo del suo romanzo, una tenerezza semplice e povera di parole che si prova per le cose fra cui si vive per tutta la vita. Questo è un altro elemento lirico di canto accorato. Citiamo alcuni brani in cui la casa del nespolo e il passe sono uniti ai fatti della vita dei personaggi. Al capitolo undicesimo, quando il giovane 'Ntoni si lamenta della vita, Maruzza, la madre, cerca di convincerlo a rimanere:

--E tu credi che dei guai non ne abbiano tutti? "Ogni buco ha il suo chiodo, chi l'ha vecchio e chi l'ha nuovo!" . . . E noi, se arriviamo a ricomprare la casa del nespolo, quando ci avremo il grano nel graticcio, e le fave per l'inverno, e avremo maritata Mena, che cosa ci mancherà? . . . Allora non ti basterà il cuore di lasciare il paese dove sei nato e cresciuto, e dove i tuoi morti saranno sotterrati sotto quel marmo, davanti all'altare dell'Addolorata che si è fatto liscio, tanto ci si sono inginocchiati sopra, la domenica.⁸

Ma poi, quando il giovane 'Ntoni non si lascia convincere e abbandona la casa del nespolo e il paese, il padron 'Ntoni osserva:

Anche al mio 'Ntoni gli gioverà stare lontano da casa sua; cost quando tornerà, e sarà stanco di girare il mondo, ogni cosa gli sembrerà buona, e non si lamenterà più di tutto; e se arriviamo un'altra volta ad avere delle barche sull'acqua, e a mettere i nostri letti laggiù, in quella casa, vedrete che bello starsi a casa stanchi, e che la giornata è andata bene.⁹

Questi sono tra in passi più commoventi del motivo della religione della famiglia; e c'è anche il sentimento della patria, come lo può intendere un umile pescatore di Aci Trezza. Citiamo per ultimo esempio di questo sentimento la scena in cui sono rappresentati i Malavoglia che stanno per andarsene dalla casa del nespolo, ceduta ad un creditore:

Il povero vecchio non aveva il coraggio di dire alla nuora che dovevano andarsene colle buone dalla casa del nespolo, dopo tanto tempo che ci erano stati, e pareva che fosse come andarsene dal paese, e spatriare, o come quelli che erano partiti per ritornare, e non erano tornati più . . . --Andiamo via, ragazzi. Tanto, oggi o domani! . . . --e non si muoveva.

Maruzza guardava la porta del cortile dalla quale erano usciti Luca e Bastianazzo, e la stradicciuola per la quale il figlio suo se ne era andato coi calzoni rimboccati, mentre pioveva, e non l'aveva visto più sotto il paracqua d'incerata . . . Ciascuno aveva qualche cosa da guardare in quella casa, e il vecchio, nell'andarsene, posò di nascosto la mano sulla porta sconquas-

sata¹⁰

In questo brano ed altri simili sembra che anche le cose partecipassero ai dolori dei personaggi e in questo modo sono infuse di vita.

L'unica conclusione a cui arriviamo è che i sentimenti infusi nel paesaggio sono quelli stessi dei personaggi. Per questa ragione i protagonisti sono poco distinti l'uno dall'altro, e formano -- anche il giovane 'Ntoni, che si ribella inutilmente all' "ideale dell'ostrica," anche i personaggi secondari che sono avvicinati ai principali dalle disgrazie -- un insieme triste e sommerso. Il protagonista, effettivamente, è nonno 'Ntoni, il capo della famiglia, quella che regge e ammonisce e tiene fermi i santi ideali tradizionali. Ma i suoi affetti sono diffusi dovunque. E, se dopo di lui, volessimo esaminare gli altri personaggi finiremmo per dire le stesse cose che abbiamo detto dello sfondo.

NOTES

1. Giovanni Verga, I Malavoglia, (Milano: Mondador, 1951), 51-53.
2. Ibid., 33-47.
3. Ibid., 91.
4. Ibid., 147.
5. Ibid., 117.
6. Ibid., 348-49.
7. Giovanni Verga, Vita dei campi, Cavalleria rusticana ed altre novelle, (Firenze: Bemporad, 1929), 28-29.
8. G. Verga, I Malavoglia, ed. cit., 235-36.
9. Ibid., 260-61.
10. Ibid., 176-77.

THE INFLUENCE OF TOLSTOY UPON ROGER MARTIN DU GARD

By Martha O'Nan, Western College for Women

The consideration of every possible influence of Tolstoy upon Roger Martin du Gard would involve a lengthy study of the many similarities which these authors have in plot, technique, and type of characters. Fortunately, however, information upon this subject may be had from Martin du Gard himself, whose esteem for Tolstoy has led him to give up his cherished idea that an author should never discuss his own work.¹ Indeed Martin du Gard's habitual silence about himself has been so extreme that it has thwarted seriously the few critics who have wanted to study his novels and plays. On the humorous side, his reticence has been the basis of considerable ridicule in the form of cartoons honoring him with a membership in an imaginary Club des Timides along with two famous timorous souls, Greta Garbo and Charles Lindberg. But even such an association does not sufficiently emphasize his unyielding refusal to talk about his favorite characters and to explain his literary ideas.

He has made only one public statement in regard to his work-- in 1937, when he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. This necessitated his delivery of a formal address in the course of which he spoke of falling under the immortal example and the powerful influence of Tolstoy. Furthermore, he explained that Tolstoy was the "grand Maître," because each of his characters was haunted by metaphysical problems and, most of all, because he was searching in his work for a meaning to life. To quote Martin du Gard:

Chacune de ses créatures est plus ou moins obscurément hantée par une préoccupation métaphysique; et chacune des expériences humaines dont il s'est fait l'historien, implique, plus encore qu'une enquête sur l'homme, une anxieuse interrogation sur le sens de la vie.²

This search of Tolstoy and his characters for an understanding of life may have been discovered by Martin du Gard in the 1890's while he was a boy studying under his beloved teacher, Abbé Marcel Hébert,³ who stimulated his pupil's interest in the Russian writer. At that time, if the youth desired to read extensively the books of Tolstoy he could do so, for the introduction of War and Peace into France in 1879 was followed by translations of the author's complete work.⁴ From his reading, Martin du Gard has chosen two of Tolstoy's novels for special praise.

One of these is Anna Karenina, described in Devenir! as being so mighty that it makes other books appear small and colorless.⁵ The second treasured book which he read was War and Peace, his constant bedside book when he was a young man of twenty.⁶ These two novels are considered the chief work of Tolstoy. War and Peace, written between 1863 and 1869, is an epic of the Napoleonic Wars, and Anna Karenina, written between 1873 and 1877, tells of Tolstoy's own spiritual struggle of that period. In fact, Anna Karenina, so far as the philosophical theme is concerned, is a continuation of War and Peace.

Since Martin du Gard has spoken so warmly of both novels, he probably had them in mind as illustrative of his reasons for admiring Tolstoy: first, because Tolstoy created men capable of analyzing different concepts of life; second, because through them, he himself attempted to find a meaning to life.

Tolstoy and Martin du Gard's main characters have every outward reason for a happy life, since they are intellectually gifted and belong either to the aristocracy or to the wealthy middle class. But as soon as their youth has passed, they suffer from a philosophical queasiness arising from uncertainty.

In truth, almost any foundation of life would be shaken by the pressure of the tragic historical and sociological forces which fall upon the characters of both authors. For example, in War and Peace most of the young men learn firsthand the horrors of war and the despair of retreat when they meet the troops of Napoleon in the battles of Braunau, Enns, Austerlitz, and Borodino. Martin du Gard's heroes of Jean Barois are just as intensely involved in the stormy Dreyfus and Zola trials, along with the historical participants. Furthermore, in his best-known novel, Les Thibault, his characters are swept into World War I and finally perish from actions connected with that war. These historical upheavals take on such vividness and reality that they may seem at times to be playing the main role. However, their most important purpose is to cause in the characters moral nausea serious enough to produce questions about what is wrong, what is right, what one must love, what life is for, what death is, and what force controls it all.

Temporary answers to these questions are found in the various conventional beliefs which Tolstoy and Martin du Gard make their characters accept. The power these beliefs have to give a brief respite from turmoil is illustrated in War and Peace by Pierre who sought peace for his soul "in philanthropy, in freemasonry, in the dissipations of society, in wine, in heroic feats of self-sacrifice, in his romantic love for Natasha; he had sought it by the path of thought; and all his researches, and all his efforts had failed him."⁷

The Pierre of War and Peace has in Anna Karenina a philosophical twin, Levin, whose longing for faith never finds satisfaction in any established religion or system of thought. After discarding the religious beliefs of his childhood, Levin spends years searching in materialistic and spiritualistic philosophies for a comprehension of the origin, purpose, reason, and nature of life and death. After reaching a point at which a new philosophy consoles him for only a few days, his unrest becomes so acute that he seeks in every book, in every conversation, and in every person whom he meets some sympathy with his questions and their solution. He, like Pierre, grasps for a philosophical lifeline, but no standard system of thought which he accepts is strong enough to save him.

Similarly, the main characters of Martin du Gard struggle to gain security in some philosophy of life. In his early work, their search leads his characters to reject the usual Christian tenets as being neither comforting nor helpful for their daily trials. An instance of such disillusionment occurs in L'Une de nous: the heroine, whose life is channeled into an endless course of tragedies, finds no guide in the attitude of the Church toward a personal God, sin, death, and free will. This same problem is found in a later novel, Jean Barois, in which the protagonist tries to find happiness in almost as many varieties of attitudes as Tolstoy's Pierre and Levin. Destined to be as changeable as they were, Jean Barois first accepts Roman Catholicism, then symbolical Catholicism,⁸ and next, a philosophy of naturalism. Finally he returns to Catholicism, thereby completing a philosophical circle. Jean Barois, more than any other character of Martin du Gard, gluts himself on one philosophy or another and soon thereafter suffers from his excesses.

The later characters--that is, those in Les Thibault--have a more limited philosophical range. In fact, the older generation in this long novel maintains unwaveringly its orthodox religious beliefs which fall primarily into the categories of Catholicism and Christian Science. Of the younger generation, Jacques Thibault, a young man of action, dies before he has sufficient time to ponder at length upon life's complexities. On the other hand, his brother, Antoine Thibault, spends so many months on his death bed that his mind focuses upon the tantalizing question of the purpose of man's existence.

Antoine's preoccupation with the meaning of life and its purpose is representative of the central problem of all of Martin du Gard's work. This sort of metaphysical interrogation holds together, somewhat like a spinal column, not only Martin du Gard's extensive writing but also that of Tolstoy. Both give to their characters temporary answers which are born, live, struggle with one another, and often come to an unhappy end just as do human beings. At the death of each set of ideas, their

characters siphon for themselves another commonly accepted philosophy of life, the quick exhaustion leaving them again in the labyrinth of falsehood. Such a cycle of acceptance and rejection keeps each individual "hantée par une préoccupation métaphysique" about which Martin du Gard has spoken in his praise of Tolstoy.

But neither Tolstoy nor Martin du Gard can leave his characters with only the dregs of worn-out philosophies, because man cannot live without finding some direction in life. The two writers are concerned with more than a consideration of various philosophies; they are looking for a meaning to life. Or, to use Martin du Gard's own words describing Tolstoy, both are making "une anxieuse interrogation sur le sens de la vie." For that reason both authors cause their characters to live through many human events such as wars, religious conflicts, family difficulties, and deaths, but since these episodes often prove abhorrent, the fictional men and women must seek elsewhere for an explanation of life.

Tolstoy's principal spokesmen, after having endured many trials, finally turn to the peasant for a comprehension of the permanent and the real in life. Looking at a peasant soldier, Pierre, of War and Peace, aspires "to enter with his whole nature into that common life, to be filled with what makes them what they are."⁹ Sometime after this, while a prisoner of the French, he meets a Russian peasant soldier who remains "forever in his mind the strongest and most precious memory, and the personification of everything Russian"¹⁰ Equally important in Anna Karenina is the peasant who acts as a catalyst to speed Levin's thoughts to a satisfying conclusion. The words of this peasant have "the effect of an electric spark, suddenly condensing the cloud of dim, incoherent thoughts"¹¹ of Levin's mind. The reverence of Tolstoy and his characters for the genuine, simple man, living in perfect harmony with nature and close to God, has the mark of Rousseau, whom Tolstoy admired excessively.¹²

No ideal peasant is portrayed by Martin du Gard. Rather, the peasants in his two farces, La Gonfle and Le Testament du Père Leleu, and in his novel, Vieille France, are carnal and brutish. They are described as a race which is "méfiante, envieuse, calculatrice, que la cupidité ravage comme un chancre."¹³ The same bestiality is found darkening the lives of the factory workers in Les Thibault, in which one finds the statement that the lower classes must have liberty and security so that the first steps toward a moral revolution can be made. Since the peasant, hardened by privations, does not represent the ideal man of nature, he cannot offer the secret of life to Martin du Gard's characters. Instead of looking at the simplest of men, they are drawn toward more complex human attainments--that is, toward science, which for them includes not only the

natural and physical sciences but also the social sciences and even science used for a strict historical analysis of the Old and New Testaments. Basing their point of view upon science, these characters seek answers to the same questions which absorb the entire lives of Tolstoy's characters. Obviously, the different beliefs upon which Martin du Gard and Tolstoy have their characters base the meaning of life determine the outcome of the final structure of their philosophy--at least so far as certain questions and answers are concerned.

The initial question which Tolstoy's characters are compelled to answer deals with the motivating force of man's activities. After many failures to find an answer to this question, Pierre is finally able to explain what he is living for:

The terrible question that had shattered all his intellectual edifices in old days, the question: What for? had no existence for him now. To that question, What for? he had now always ready in his soul the simple answer: Because there is a God, that God without whom not one hair of a man's head falls.¹⁴

Likewise, in Anna Karenina, once Levin frees himself from error he clearly resolves that he is to live for God and for his own soul. On the other hand, Antoine Thibault, the hero of Les Thibault, having reached almost the same age as Pierre and Levin, rejects faith in God as a sufficient explanation for his desire to do his best in life. To the question What for? he replies: "Au nom de rien, voilà tout. Poser la question, c'est postuler qu'il y a 'quelque chose,' c'est tomber dans le traquenard métaphysique . . ." ¹⁵ To leave Antoine with his thoughts echoing this note of doom would be to place him incorrectly in the category of a defeatist. From other statements of his, "in the name of nothing" means that the false gods of society such as revealed religions, systems of philosophy, and scientism must not be accepted as the "props" of life. His confidence in a universal movement toward progress compels him to believe that a man must work to do his best in order to leave an enriched, improved legacy for the next generation. One must work for the purpose of assuring "la continuité . . . transmettre ce qu'on a reçu, le transmettre amélioré, enrichi."¹⁶

Another question answered differently by Tolstoy's and Martin du Gard's characters is concerned with the origin of conscience. In Tolstoy's work, conscience is explained as part of man's spiritual, divine nature; it is a judge within oneself settling what one must do and what one must not do by some laws of which one is unaware.¹⁷ Confronted by the same question, Antoine Thibault concludes that the human conscience originates from heredity and tradition:

Autant je rejette l'idée que la conscience morale aurait pour source quelque loi divine, autant il me paraît plausible d'admettre qu'elle a ses origines dans le passé humain, qu'elle est une habitude qui survit à la cause qui l'a fait naître, et qui est fixée en nous, à la fois par hérédité et par tradition.¹⁸

Further questions such as those dealing with free will and responsibility could be discussed in order to show that Tolstoy sought an answer in the realm of the spiritual while Martin du Gard attempts to find an explanation in the social evolution of man. But above and beyond these questions Martin du Gard and Tolstoy have a meeting ground in their conviction that a complete understanding of life is beyond the grasp of the human being.

In the last pages of War and Peace Tolstoy wrote that "the higher the human intellect rises . . . the more obvious it becomes that the final aim is beyond its reach."¹⁹ In like vein, Levin of Anna Karenina, immediately after reaching that pinnacle where he found a deep meaning to his life, confessed that "the relations of human belief to God must, for me, remain unfathomable; to search them out belongs not to me."²⁰ Reaching the same conclusion, Martin du Gard's characters recognize the frontier which cuts the individual off from the "whys" of life. A representative advocate of this idea is Jean Barois who wrote that "quant aux premières de ces phénomènes, je crois qu'elles sont hors de notre plan de vision, et inaccessibles à nos recherches . . . Il est temps que nous . . . renoncions enfin aux pourquoi sans réponse . . ."²¹ The why or the final aim is conceded by both Martin du Gard and Tolstoy as being impossible to find.

Moreover, Martin du Gard would agree with Tolstoy when the latter called science the "supposed" possessor of truth, for Martin du Gard time and time again attacks the smugness and dogmatism of science. He and his characters, like Pierre and Andrey in War and Peace, would stand in awe of the mystery of the world and would say with them that "all is vanity, all is a cheat, except that infinite sky."²² But even though he respects the unknown, he would do no more than give the irrational a place in his thought; he would not allow it to usurp so large a place as Tolstoy. And yet, in considering ordinary human life, he would be less on the common plane than Tolstoy. He would hardly be content with Pierre who concluded that "man is created for happiness, that happiness lies in himself, in the satisfaction of his natural, human cravings; that all unhappiness is due not to lack of what is needful but to superfluity."²³ Rather, Martin du Gard would say that what makes a man is being a little more than man, being something of a super moralist. Thus, it is with the highest ideals of Tolstoy--such ideals as love of one's neighbor and one's enemy which demand abnegation--that Martin du Gard

would ally himself.

The granting that such a love can exist, that man can be more than human is the meeting ground of Tolstoy and Martin du Gard. Neither writer has ended with the deadening attitude: What's the use? Even though Martin du Gard does not agree at every point with Tolstoy, whom he calls an unapproachable genius, he, like his master, has enough faith in the good in the world to have his characters search for a way of life in order to find a center of gravity which will give them strength and balance. In this way, his Jean Barois, Les Thibault, and other works reveal traits derived from War and Peace and Anna Karenina.

NOTES

1. Roger Martin du Gard, Devenir!, 7th ed. (Paris, 1930), p. 35.
2. Les Prix Nobel 1937, Nobelstiftelsen (Stockholm, 1938), p. 68.
3. Albert Houtin (ed.), Un Prêtre symboliste, Marcel Hébert (Paris, 1935), p. 239.
4. E. Sémenoff, "Qui a introduit Léon Tolstoï en France?", Mercur de France, 15 septembre 1928, p. 721.
5. Devenir!, p. 189.
6. Les Prix Nobel 1937, p. 104.
7. Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace, trans. Constance Garnett (New York, Modern Library, n.d.), p. 952.
8. Symbolical Catholicism was advocated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in France by the Modernists whose most conspicuous figure was Alfred Loisy. They wanted an agreement between the Church and modern ideas and presented distinct phases of interest such as Biblical criticism, philosophy, social and political questions, and science. These men, whose ideas were not consistent with Catholic beliefs, flourished under the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878 to 1906) who on many occasions refused to condemn unorthodox thought. But, upon becoming Pope in 1906, Pius X placed on the Index many books written by Modernists and compelled every official teacher in the Roman Catholic Church to take a stand against Modernism. See: R. P. Lécaneu, La Vie de l'Eglise sous Léon XIII (Paris, 1930);

Jean Rivière, Le Modernisme dans l'Eglise (Paris, 1929); Georges Weill, Histoire de l'idée laïque en France au XIX^e siècle (Paris, 1929).

9. War and Peace, p. 794.
10. Ibid., p. 913.
11. Lyof N. Tolstoï, Anna Karenina, The Complete Works (New York, 1899), II, p. 369.
12. When Tolstoy was fifteen, he wore around his neck not a cross but a charm showing Rousseau's profile. Throughout his life he was influenced by Rousseau's doctrine.
13. Roger Martin du Gard, Vieille France (Neuchatel, 1946), p. 73.
14. War and Peace, p. 1040.
15. Roger Martin du Gard, Epilogue, Les Thibault (Paris, 1940), VIII, p. 289.
16. Ibid., p. 323.
17. War and Peace, p. 1043.
18. Epilogue, p. 286.
19. War and Peace, p. 1070.
20. Anna Karenina, p. 396.
21. Roger Martin du Gard, Jean Barois (Paris, 1921), p. 355.
22. War and Peace, p. 259.
23. Ibid., p. 997.

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ARTURO MEJIA NIETO: STORY-TELLER FROM HONDURAS

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Sectional rivalries have characterized the history of Central America. Honduras, lying more or less in the geographic and certainly in the political center of the area, has been involved in most of them. As Rafael Heliodoro Valle says:

La historia de Honduras puede escribirse en una lágrima. País de pinos en primavera eterna y de montañas difíciles, por él han corrido largos ríos de sangre en una larga noche de odio y de dolor.¹

Conquistadores quarreled over Honduran land; colonial governors disputed boundaries; after the declaration of independence from Spain in 1921, Honduran devotion to the ideal of Central American federation brought many troubles. Almost every dissatisfied Central American politician, attempting to overthrow his own country's government, intrigued with or against the government of Honduras, or with refugees and sympathizers residing there. Honduran governments have been of the caudillo type, notably more unstable than the norm for that type. The situation finally became intolerable, and in 1907 representatives of the five Central American nations met in Washington and agreed to neutralize Honduras, allowing her to observe, and promising to observe toward her, strict neutrality in all future conflicts in the area. Since then, things have improved.²

Such conditions are adverse to literature. Arturo Mejía Nieto wrote in 1938: "El artista por acá . . . suele estar fuera de lugar . . . Es que cuando hacen falta leyes y caminos mal pueden los artistas hacerse presentes con su aporte prematuro."³ Honduras had no great literary figures in Colonial times, and few nineteenth century literatos. It is only in our own day that she has begun to produce poets and prose writers of a stature to rank with those of her neighbors--men such as Rafael Heliodoro Valle, Froylán Turcios, Marcos Carías Reyes, and Arturo Mejía Nieto. Honduran writers have been little studied, although some of them have real values to offer the curious reader.

On of the most attractive of the contemporaries is the cuentista Arturo Mejía Nieto (1900-). Little known to United States readers, probably he is still more highly regarded abroad than at home. Since he was twenty-nine years of age he has lived in Buenos Aires, as consul and then as minister of his country, and all of his books after the first have been published outside Honduras.⁴

Manuel Ugarte wrote the preface for one of his books, El Chele Amaya. Other works have been reviewed favorably in such periodicals as the Revue de l'Amérique Latine (Paris), El Sol (Madrid), Books Abroad, and La Prensa (Buenos Aires).⁵ One of his stories, "La culebra" (first published as "El gato" in Zapatos viejos), is included in anthologies of the cuento published in Chile and Mexico.⁶

On the other hand, Hugo Lindo's Antología del cuento moderno centroamericano, which is at once more voluminous and more restricted in geographical scope than the two above, has stories by four other contemporary Hondurans but does not mention Mejía Nieto.⁷ Nor does Martin Erickson's article "Central America: The Literary Scene, 1943" include his name in a list of the most important contemporary Honduran writers.⁸ Our author is briefly mentioned in Julio A. Leguizamón's Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana⁹ and in Luis Alberto Sánchez' Nueva historia de la literatura americana,¹⁰ and not at all in the Outline History of Spanish American Literature.¹¹

Mejía Nieto's first book, Relatos nativos (1929), gave a foretaste of what his writing was to be for the next seven years. In the prefatory "Propósito" the author refers to this "humilde libro" as one inspired by "motivos típicamente americanos," eschewing all imitation of European models. The very first tale, "Tiempos viejos," in a way sets a pattern. Note the nostalgic flavor of the title. A loving recollection of happy past days in the Honduran village of Santa Clara is characteristic of most of Mejía Nieto's work. The story begins thus:

Las tías Paz vivían en una casa de la esquina. Una de ellas, Micaela, pasaba muy enferma y cuando Carlos Nufio llegaba le contaba mentiras. Ella le decía que había salido a su padre, don Pedro, que había muerto asesinado cuando los liberales se tomaron el pueblo . . . Se me vienen tantos recuerdos cuando pienso en Carlos; ahora, aquí, lejos de aquellos tiempos y del pueblecito tan atrasado, pero tan querido en mi corazón. La vida de aquel tiempo realmente que era llena de risas y de lágrimas. Era vida efectivamente porque así debe ser la vida. Aquí voy a poner sinceramente y claramente por qué dije que Carlos tenía buen corazón y voy a decir también los motivos ridículos con que Carlos hacía reír a todos.¹²

In addition to the nostalgic memory of the village, one should also note the style, simple, colloquial, sentimental; the hero, attractive, popular, careless, but also virtuous, impoverished, unfortunate; the life of the town, "llena de risas y de lágrimas"; and finally, the suggestion of a comic element.

The plot of the story, too, is anticipatory of much later work. Carlos, a well-developed youth but a backward scholar, loves the teacher. Perhaps she loves him; one is not sure. But there is another who stands between them: Agustín, whose life seems always to run parallel to and opposed to that of Carlos. Our hero leaves the village, and many years later we see him a leading citizen in another town. His wedding is interrupted by a vicious attack promoted by Agustín and his cohorts--he, too, is in love with the girl. Carlos wins the struggle. Much later, having been elected mayor, he hears of a very promising candidate for the local school. When he interviews her, it turns out to be his old maestra, now happily married. Their love, never confessed before, remains unspoken. Note the restraint and quiet of this ending, after the eruption of jealous violence which had divided the whole town.

The rest of this first volume is undistinguished. The author has, obviously, not reached maturity. There are fine passages but no story or sketch economically organized and brought to a terse and inevitable conclusion.

The next volume, Zapatos viejos (1930), was written in Buenos Aires. Its title is explained thus:

Lejos del color local (el ambiente de Centro América) se ha escrito este libro con recuerdos. Recuerdos viejos, ya un poco deteriorados en la memoria, pero preferidos: así como se prefieren por costumbre los zapatos viejos.¹³

These twelve stories and sketches, similar in theme and atmosphere to those of Relatos nativos, show a marked advance in artistry. They include two of the author's best works: "El chele Amaya," later to become the title-piece of another collection, and "El gato."

"El chele Amaya"--a chefe is an "hombre de cutis rosado" according to the vocabulary provided in the book--begins in medias res:

Guaro, frío, indios aguerridos, duraznos, todo eso hay en mi pueblo, y además de eso estoy yo. ¡Fama de bravo tengo en Santa Clara! Una vez me dijeron gayo ronco, saqué el 44, le di un tiro al que lo dijo y me eché a reír.¹⁴

The hero is a braggart bully who joins a revolutionary army. Sent to reconnoitre, he brings back warning that government forces are almost upon them. The general harangues the men so lengthily that they are taken by surprise and routed. When a scapegoat is needed, Amaya is blamed for giving false information and thoroughly whipped. The bully can hardly believe that this has happened to him. Telling the story in

his own language, El Chele manages to make himself thoroughly ridiculous. The story is a little masterpiece of satire.

"El gato" is quite different--a tale of humble peasants. It begins:

Vivían los dos en un rancho de paja. Las vigas y la paja del techo estaban ennegrecidas por el humo y el hollín del fogón en que se calentaba la jarrilla del café. Adentro del cuarto quedaba todavía prendido de raíz el tronco de un árbol; lo usaban para colocar allí objetos de cocina. Durante el día, ella iba a traer agua y él, con aburrimiento, pasaba bostezando en la puerta y mirando hacia el llano.¹⁵

Pola, the heroine, is a widow at sixteen. She has been living in her rancho with an unnamed forastero who had come seeking shelter one night, and just stayed on. She has been courted by the mayordomo of a neighboring hacienda and, when she finally promises to run off with him, he leaves her a bottle of guaro so that she can get the forastero drunk and escape more easily. When he is in a stupor, she lies down beside him to await the mayordomo. As the two sleep, the cat drags into their very bed a snake which Pola had tried to kill that afternoon. In consequence a gruesome sight greets the mayordomo:

. . . Entre el hombre y Pola estaba el gato. El brazo derecho de Pola no parecía un brazo humano, estaba negro, negro como inyectado de tinta.¹⁶

The next year (1931) came twelve more stories in a volume entitled El solterón. The hero of the title-story, Hilario Mendoza, has promised a dying mother that he will not marry until he has found husbands for his two sisters. All his efforts to do so are in vain. Even the girl who is waiting for him cannot find husbands for these two "solteras inútiles." She loses patience and marries another man. Then, surprisingly, one sister finds a husband. The other runs off and is never heard from again. The brother lives alone, a melancholy bachelor. Many years later a letter arrives addressed to the missing sister. It is from Hilario's novia of long ago and tells of her happy marriage and her children. Perhaps Hilario could visit them? She knows a spinster he might like. Imitating his sister's writing, Hilario writes an answer. He tells of his own happy marriage and children, then tears up the picture he has cherished these many years.

In these three stories and in "El perro" (to be discussed later) Mejía Nieto has done his best work. About this time he seems to have tired of the cuento and turned to the novel. El tunco was published in Buenos Aires in 1932.¹⁷ It is an interesting tale of lust and revolution;

the characters show how well the author has mixed the ingredients. There is "El tunco" himself, a coarse, brutal revolutionary leader named Pepe Cardoso. His "woman" is Soledad, a creature of easy morals who has repeatedly and openly betrayed her now dead husband. Her daughter Adelita has had an affair with the son of a leading family in Santa Clara. Then there is don Joaquín Ramos, the village philosopher and teacher, the only really simpático character in the book. These personages are surrounded by a host of minor characters: the dead Villafranca, whose presence is always felt although he had fled town and his unfaithful wife long before; the comandante of the town; Damián Luna, the illiterate mestizo sergeant; and the illegitimate son of Pepe and Soledad.

The characters are well-drawn and life-like, but they are also symbols, as don Joaquín explains at the end:

Ese grupo de personas simbolizan nuestros problemas sociales: Las revoluciones, el alcoholismo, el analfabetismo, los hijos sin padre y la incapacidad para la acción. Fíjate bien: Cardoso representó la revolución militar, Manuel Villafranca representó el alcoholismo, Soledad . . . el problema de los hijos sin padre; Damián Luna . . . el analfabetismo, y yo el hombre incapaz para la acción. ¡Acaso no te he dicho que tengo muchos ideales bellos, pero que me siento incapaz de llevarlos a la práctica ?¹⁸

Here is, clearly, the author's theme: the ills of his country. He repeatedly points out the remedy:

Es tiempo ya de concluir con el odio. Aquí no hay cooperación, no hay solidaridad, no hay amor . . .
Simplemente porque ninguna de esas cosas puede convivir con el odio, de la misma manera que la paloma no convive con el gavilán . . . El odio . . . es campo propicio para la envidia, la hipocresía, la traición, la calumnia, la confabulación sórdida contra toda labor constructiva . . .

Lo que necesitamos es olvidarnos de la política y solidarizarnos en la obra común, la obra del trabajo.¹⁹

El tunco is not a great novel, nor is it a poor one. Its action is gripping, although sometimes clumsily interrupted by moralizing; its characters are well-drawn; its language is straightforward, unadorned, earthy; it has some good descriptions; it has an important theme. It is, in fact, far better reading than the somewhat mechanical arrangement of its character-symbols would suggest.

With his next two books, El perfil americano (1933) and El prófugo de sí mismo (1934), Mejía Nieto carries forward the theme of reform.

El perfil is an "ensayo de interpretación de la realidad americana" in the form of a lengthy conversation between two friends. Essentially a comparison of the civilizations of Anglo and Hispanic America, it is based upon the author's travel and residence in the United States.²⁰ The book draws heavily on Bunge, of whom Mejía says: "Su libro Nuestra América es posiblemente lo mejor que se ha escrito sobre el mismo tema por un hispanoamericano."²¹ The influence of James Bryce is also clear, and André Siegfried is mentioned repeatedly.

Advancing the theory that the two halves of the American hemisphere have fundamental misunderstandings precisely because they confidently believe that they understand each other well (and are wrong), the author divides the factors to be studied into two classes: human factors (historic, geographic, cultural and social) and material factors (commercial and political). The United States knows only the latter, which are the less important. Hispanic America has studied the human factors for Europe, not for North America. She should now turn her attention to the United States and imitate it rather than Europe. Thus she would follow the advice of Sarmiento, who knew the United States, rather than that of Rodó, who did not know this nation.

Mejía's judgment of his countrymen is as scathing as that of Bunge. They have "la afición a frases retumbantes, la sensibilidad a la amistad o al insulto, el sentimiento de la dignidad personal" which make life and work so complex in Hispanic America, and they are "fanfarrones, negligentes, amigos de la guitarra y la mujer."²² Furthermore:

Nos falta una religión que nos enseñe principios morales, no tenemos amor para el trabajo, las costumbres de nuestros hogares son deplorables, no respetamos a la mujer, todavía no tenemos higiene social en nuestras ciudades, no tenemos un concepto claro del deber.²³

In contrast, the United States has cultivated so highly the technology of satisfying its material needs that it has standardized its people and made them slaves to their own machines. Creative expression in the individual has been inhibited and is perhaps no longer possible.²⁴ Our life moves too rapidly in every way. There is no time for reflection and enjoyment.

The people of the two halves of the hemisphere are, in Mejía Nieto's eyes, very different. His statement should be required reading for some of our professional panamericanists:

. . . Nos diferencia la raza, la religión, el clima y la historia . . . El hispanoamericano es más orgulloso y más

sensible cuando se le desaira. Pero menos aplicado y persistente. No nos gusta el comercio, pero nos atrae la política. Somos excitables y amigos de expresar nuestros sentimientos de manera violenta. Y cosa rara: no hemos tomado o heredado absolutamente de la taciturnidad india, del aspecto impasible del indio. Somos todo lo contrario. Además mezclamos la amistad en todo. Por eso somos malos comerciantes y peores jueces. De verdad, los norteamericanos y los hispanoamericanos tenemos apenas dos cosas en común: americanos y republicanos.²⁵

El prófugo de sí mismo novelizes this same contrast. Oliverio, the central figure, is a young Honduran studying and working in Chicago. Gradually he begins to like the United States --much against his will, for he cannot accept its mode of life:

Oliverio observó que en Chicago . . . las necesidades materiales se iban multiplicando en tal número, que en la vida no quedaba tiempo para el descanso ni para el ocio . . . cosas indispensables para la vida y la felicidad . . .

Oliverio llegó a estas conclusiones: Que la felicidad . . . estriba en "dejarse vivir" . . . filosofía que no correspondía a la del bien vivir . . . Y era la que Oliverio observó, es decir ésta última, en Chicago.²⁶

Oliverio views the people of the United States with more charity than do many of his compatriots:

Son mejores de lo que nosotros creemos. Tienen más alma de la que le suponemos. Nos engañamos por su aparente materialismo en la enorme contextura del edificio que están haciendo . . . Una cosa es cierta: les vemos con prejuicio a causa de su poderío. Posiblemente les tenemos odio por esta misma razón y el odio sólo es posible en los débiles o en los ignorantes.²⁷

When the maladjusted young man returns to Santa Clara, it is only to find that he can no longer be happy there. He throws himself off a cliff, and the novel closes with the kind of nature motif frequently found in Spanish American fiction:

En el aire empezó a volar una ave negra de rapiña mientras el cadáver del pobre Oliverio yacía abandonado, completamente abandonado, sobre la hierba húmeda. El ave de rapiña cayó repetidas veces, pero el perro defendió tenazmente una y otra vez los despojos del muerto.²⁸

El prófugo suffers from too much social psychology, too much soul-searching, too little action. Its characters are pale compared to those of El tunco. The book's virtues are its descriptions of the inevitable Santa Clara and its study of frustration.²⁹

Mejía's next work, El chele Amaya y otros cuentos (1936), contains eleven stories, all but three of which had already been published in earlier collections. One of the new tales, La negra Toribia, is among the author's best. It tells how a coward escapes death in battle by disguising himself in the clothes of La negra, a picturesque old woman who sold talking parrots. When he returns home he finds that his empty uniform has been buried with full military honors. His wife, indignant at the threat of disgrace, drives him away. He is never seen again, but each year his grave is decorated as that of a hero who gave his life for his country.

This volume gathers together the best of Mejía's tales. The stories are "notable for realism . . . deserve a wide audience; but most readers will need the final vocabulary to understand some of the unusual phrases."³⁰

Three years later Mejía produced a novel, Liberación, which is a complete break with his previous work. It is also a failure. Its hero is a discontented man who, tired of a comfortable and successful existence, disguises himself and tries to lead a completely new life. The scene is Buenos Aires, and obviously the author, although he had lived there for years, was unable to put that city into words. There is nothing of Buenos Aires in the book.³¹ In fact, the novel seems to have no roots anywhere. It is wordy and full of trite philosophical digressions. There is not one memorable character in the book, not one scene or episode that remains with the reader after he has put down the volume.

Our author published no more books until 1947, when the biography Morazán appeared. It is a good picture of an enigmatic figure, although, according to Rafael Heliodoro Valle, it could well have included more about the political background of the events of Morazán's life. It has, perhaps, too much detailed military history.³²

Since that time, Mejía Nieto has published nothing else in book form, although he has been active in critical writing and some cuentos have appeared separately in various reviews.³³ I have seen nothing comparable in quality to his earlier work. Has the well of memories, "ya deteriorados" when he wrote Zapatos viejos, run dry?

Are there permanent values in the works of Mejía Nieto? What things are most characteristic of his fiction?

First, let us remember the many descriptions of Santa Clara. Few writers have described so well a beloved childhood scene. Santa Clara appears everywhere in his work. Perhaps it is best described in El prófugo de sí mismo: "ciudad humilde, modesta y buena"³⁴ which lives "desperezándose."³⁵ In an unforgettable passage we see the Indians plodding silently through the streets, the cows in the plaza, the hill of Coquimba looming in the darkness. Dogs bark in the distance. "Todo era simplicidad, paz, quietud." Everyone, really, was bored, but it was a pleasant boredom, and one enjoyed hearing at night the notes of Ildefonso Fonseca's flute.³⁶

This flute appears several times in Mejía's work, particularly in El tunco, where it is for don Joaquín "un halo de poesía."³⁷ Was there a real Ildefonso Fonseca? Or does the author remember Azorín's Una flauta en la noche, with its "melodía larga, melancólica, que parece un hilito de cristal que por momentos va a romperse"?³⁸

The larger scene, the landscape of Honduras, is prominent in Mejía Nieto's work. He asks himself whether the people take their character from the landscape:

Así es nuestro país . . . Indómito, reacio hacia todos los cánones de la civilización, pero por eso mismo libre, con una apariencia primitiva. Y de ese aspecto topográfico, algo hay en el carácter de nuestra gente.³⁹

When Mejía Nieto leaves this beloved scene, as he did in Liberación and in some parts of El prófugo de sí mismo, he is less successful. His powers of description are not versatile.

Mejía Nieto's characters are many. We find a host of frustrated intellectuals: Joaquín in El tunco, the heroes of El prófugo and Liberación. There is the mestizo revolutionary, like Pepe Cardoso and Amaya. There are many drunkards, notably don Alberto Lima in "El perro" and don Julio Bulnes in "Una silla de ruedas." There are humble peones, and many slightly-sketched comic characters like Toribia. Of all of them, perhaps the most poignant is the type mentioned first, the frustrated character. Such a one is the hero of El prófugo:

Me siento entre el entusiasmo y la duda; entre el instinto y la razón; entre el goce y la pena. Tengo confianza y vuelvo los ojos a la esperanza. Hoy, mañana, seré lo que quiero ser. Vengo a mi cuarto y no sé cómo haré uso de mí. No sé . . .

Probablemente, inconscientemente, me he evitado vivir, disfrutar de las pequeñas delicias. No he gozado del pasado,

esperando el presente y renunciando al presente por esperar el futuro. De verdad lo que hago es renunciar la vida.⁴⁰

Sometimes it is the hero's character which makes him incapable of action, sometimes circumstances render action impossible. In either case, the result is tragedy. Only with don Joaquín, proud of his own indecisiveness, is tragedy avoided. But the personal tragedy which does not appear is still the larger tragedy of the nation:

Precisamente si yo, a pesar de la visión clara que tengo de nuestros problemas, no puedo hacer nada, absolutamente nada, es porque soy incapaz para la acción. Soy un contemplativo, soy un incapaz, eso es todo. Tan incapaz como todos mis compatriotas, por eso nuestro país es lo que es.⁴¹

Mejía Nieto has favorite themes which may be grouped together under the general heading "the ills of Honduras," the same ills as those symbolized by the characters in El tunco: revolutions, alcoholism, illiteracy, illegitimacy, abulia. All except illiteracy (perhaps an unlikely theme for literature!) appear time and again.

Alcoholism is the subject of some of the best stories. It appears once ("Pancho") in Relatos nativos; twice in Zapatos viejos ("El gato" and "Una silla de ruedas"); three times in El solterón ("Tomás," "El perro," and "Don Ramón"); finally, two of the three new stories in El chele Amaya ("El novio" and "Sebastiana") deal with alcoholism. The most tragic story is "El perro," in which don Alberto Lima, a model of shy correctness and temperance, surprises everyone by getting drunk and announcing his intention of barking like a dog. When he does bark, the tragic comedy breaks up the party. Don Alberto, inert, is carried home. Morning brings news of his suicide and also the revelation that for a long time he has been a drunkard, lovingly concealed and cared for by his family.

Illegitimates appear frequently in Mejía's work. There are two in El tunco, and two in the story "Inés" (Zapatos viejos); there are three in "El mujeriego." In this story, three little boys make remarks about each other's parentage and get into a furious tussle. When they are separated it is revealed that all three are illegitimates and children of the same man, the village rake!

Mejía Nieto does not depict the problems of illegitimacy with indignant fervor. Rather, he seems to view with indifference, if not with amusement. "La lechuza," in the collection El solterón, is an example. A husband comes back from a term in jail to find his place occupied by another. He had been reported dead--prisoners die easily

in Central America--and no one is really to blame for the situation. The two men draw lots. The husband wins house and woman; the intruder goes off with his two children. There are no hard feelings.

Somewhere in his memoirs, Pío Baroja has said that any story, however common and uneventful, will make good reading if it is told with sufficient detail. This applies well to many cuentos from the pen of Mejía Nieto. He gives them a sense of truth by writing in the first person, by using many details, by insisting that he knew about this by personal experience long ago.

Mejía Nieto's style is simple, flowing, colloquial, nostalgic. He avoids the palabrería tropical of Central America, however, feeling that it is not "en relación con la manera moderna de pensar."⁴² In reading his work, one thinks occasionally of Valera, more often of Azorín. He can be compared in some cuentos with a less sophisticated Somerset Maugham; other stories recall the Sherwood Anderson of Winesburg, Ohio. Mejía Nieto believes that one must not only know one's subject and one's technique well; one must also feel deeply. "Ya Henry James observaba que la cualidad más profunda y destacada de una obra de arte era siempre la cualidad del espíritu del autor. No hay obras, pues: hay temperamentos."⁴³ His work is, indeed, a reflection of his mood.

In the early thirties Mejía had a great enthusiasm for reform. Strongly implied in much of his fiction, the need for reform is the underlying theme of El perfil americano and El tunco. As we have seen, he advised imitation of the United States, while preserving due caution as to the mechanized aspects of its culture.⁴⁴ The years seem to have reconciled him to acceptance of the status quo, if the following ironic statement, made in 1950, is to be taken at face value:

En las cinco capitales de Centro-América (y sus hijos no reparan) el lujoso Cadillac o Lincoln desentona con los indios descalzos. Clara está que esto último encanta a los ojos del turista y ¿por qué negarlo? a nosotros mismos nos hace pensar que todavía ponemos dique al modernismo con las carretas de bueyes y los burritos. Mas . . . debajo de ello señala una realidad social: que evidencia un desequilibrio financiero en nuestra economía centroamericana. Mas, tú y yo somos hombres de ideología derechista y estos casos debemos callarlos o de lo contrario ya tendrás el mote de comunista, siendo apenas un patriota. Enhoramala llevar la conversación a este terreno.⁴⁵

Perhaps Mejía Nieto has lost the desire to protest. He seems, in fact, to have become one of his own characters, a spectator able to criticize but incapable of corrective action.

How shall we finally rank Arturo Mejía Nieto? Certainly among the best Honduras has produced in our century. He can be compared with Samayoa Chinchilla and Wyld Ospina in Guatemala, with Calero Orozco and Hernán Robleto in Nicaragua, with Ambrogi and Salarrué in El Salvador. The best of his cuentos are not inferior to, although far different from, the Cuentos ticos of Fernández Guardia. He has, in the words of one critic, "a charming style . . . /which/ sets off . . . /his/ thorough acquaintance with his subject matter, his keen sensibility for local color, and his rich imagination."⁴⁶

One can agree readily with the critic who wrote "Valor perdurable . . . es su certero instinto de novelista y cuentista, hecho de capacidad de observación y de agudeza visual." But one feels that the same critic's list of defects ("oscuridad, descuido, y pobreza en la expresión, tarada de una sintaxis en extremo atrabiliaria") is unjust, and certainly most will disagree with the statement: "Hay una considerable distancia entre la aptitud del señor Mejía Nieto para ver y elegir los temas, plasmar los personajes, animar las acciones, y la limpieza de sus medios expresivos."⁴⁷

Regrettably, Mejía Nieto has not fulfilled the promise of his early works. No volume of stories has appeared since El chele Amaya, twenty years ago, and this contained only three new stories. The few recent works of fiction noted in various reviews do not reach the level of the early works. Our author seems to have "run out." His favorite theme (the village remembered, and its problems) has been exhausted and he has found no other. He has, instead, turned away from fiction to biography and criticism. But it is for a few fine cuentos that readers of Spanish American literature will remember him.⁴⁸

NOTES

1. Rafael Heliodoro Valle, "El hondureño Ramón Rosa," Cuadernos Americanos, XL, 4 (julio-agosto, 1948), 173.
2. For a brief summary of Honduran history see Charles Edward Chapman, Republican Hispanic America (New York:Macmillan, 1937), 252-262.
3. Arturo Mejía Nieto, "Lugones, hombre de América," Nosotros, 2a época, III (mayo-julio, 1938), 107.
4. Relatos nativos (Tegucigalpa:Tipografía Nacional, 1929); Zapatos viejos (Buenos Aires:J. Samet, 1930); El solterón (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Argentinos, L. J. Rosso, 1931); El tunco (Buenos

Aires:Ed. Tor, 1932); El perfil americano (Buenos Aires:Librerías Anaconda, 1933); El prófugo de sí mismo (Buenos Aires:Ed. Tor, 1934); El chele Amaya y otros cuentos (Santiago de Chile:Ed. Ercilla, 1936); Liberación (Buenos Aires:Ed. Sopena, 1939); Morazán, presidente de la desaparecida república centroamericana (Buenos Aires:Ed. Nova, 1947). Zapatos viejos lists also as "por publicarse" two other works: Hablan los indios (cuentos regionales) and La escena norteamericana e hispanoamericana (Sobre el conflicto interamericano que el autor ha escrito después de vivir en Norte, Centro y Sud América). So far as I can ascertain, the former has not been published. The latter is probably El perfil americano. We know also from a "Carta de Santiago Argüello," dated October 23, 1923, and published at the front of Relatos nativos, that there was an unpublished book of poems, Proyecciones. Jorge Fidel Durón's Índice de la bibliografía hondureña (Tegucigalpa:Imprenta Calderón, 1946) lists on p. 211 a novel A la deriva (Buenos Aires:Ed. Manuel Lañez, 1938). I have not seen this, and cannot find mention of it elsewhere. It is not among the published works which are listed in Liberación, published the next year.

5. See the bombos in the end-papers of Zapatos viejos and El tunco.
6. Antonio R. Manzor, Antologíá del cuento hispanoamericano (Santiago de Chile:Ed. Zig-Zag, 1939), 145-149; and Francisco Rojas González, Antologíá del cuento americano contemporáneo, (México, D. F.:Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1952), 171-177.
7. Hugo Lindo, Antologíá del cuento moderno centroamericano, (San Salvador:Universidad Autónoma de El Salvador, Biblioteca Universitaria XIII [1949] and XV [1950]). The other authors are Argentina D'íaz Lozano, Marcos Carías Reyes, Arturo Martínez Galindo, and Jorge Edmundo Quinónez. Jorge Sánchez, "El cuento hispanoamericano," Revista Iberoamericana, XVI, 31 (febrero-julio, 1950), 101-122, mentions Mejía Nieto briefly as one "cuyos relatos han aportado un caudal al folklore americano." In his short paragraph on the cuento in Honduras he mentions also Froylán Turcios, Marcos Carías Reyes, and Arturo Martínez Galindo.
8. Hispania, XXVII (1944), 148-154. However, Mejía Nieto published nothing in 1943.
9. Vol. II (Buenos Aires:Ed. Reunidas, 1945), 490.
10. Buenos Aires:Ed. Americalee (1944), 424.
11. E. Herman Hespelt et al, Outline History of Spanish American

Literature (New York:F.S. Crofts, 1941).

12. Relatos nativos, 5.
13. Zapatos viejos, 5.
14. Ibid., 17.
15. Ibid., 69.
16. Ibid., 78.
17. The hero is called tunco "a causa de que le faltaba el dedo pulgar." El tunco, p. 58. See also p. 62.
18. El tunco, 254-255. There is a similar declaration on p. 106.
19. Ibid., 100.
20. See El tunco, 106, and El perfil americano, 9. Mejía Nieto studied in the United States.
21. El perfil americano, 171.
22. Ibid., 10-11.
23. Ibid., 31-32.
24. This idea is developed more fully in an article, "La sociedad mecanizada" in Repertorio Americano, XLVI, 13 (10 de julio, 1950), 202-204.
25. El perfil americano, 16-17.
26. El prófugo de sí mismo, 120-121.
27. Ibid., 62-63.
28. Ibid., 156-157.
29. It contains also (p. 8) an excellent translation of fourteen lines of Sandburg's Chicago.
30. W. J. K., review of El chele Amaya in Books Abroad, XI (1937), 235.
31. That city is in part the scene of the last three stories in El solterón--

the least successful in that collection.

32. Revista de Historia de América, 25 (junio, 1948), 224-227.
33. His criticism has appeared especially in La Nación and other Buenos Aires papers to which I have not had access. Examples of recent fiction are: Las gaviotas, Revista de la Universidad (Tegucigalpa), XIV (abril-junio, 1950), 90-92; El legalismo, Repertorio Americano, XLVI, 7 (15 de septiembre, 1950), 261-262.
34. El prófugo de s' mismo, 123.
35. Ibid., 118.
36. Ibid., 99. A similar description appears in El tunco, 82-83.
37. El tunco, 84. See also 81, 180, 187, 215, 220.
38. José Martínez Ruiz, Obras completas, XIII (Madrid:Raggio, 1920), 168.
39. El tunco, 133.
40. El prófugo de s' mismo, 46.
41. El tunco, 126-127.
42. Relatos nativos, v-vii.
43. See "Consideraciones sobre la técnica del cuento" in El chele Amaya, 11-15.
44. Similar ideas are stressed in El prófugo de s' mismo.
45. "Cartas asuncenas," Revista de la Universidad (Tegucigalpa), XIV (julio-septiembre, 1950), 93. The article is dated "Asunción, junio de 1950."
46. A. M. de la Torre, review of Zapatos viejos, Books Abroad, VII (1933), 85.
47. E. Suárez Calimano, "Letras hispanoamericanas," Nosotros, 2a época, 7 (octubre, 1936), 211.
48. Author's note (October, 1956): Since this paper was written a new volume of cuentos has been published (El pecador (Buenos Aires:

Guillermo Kraft, 1956). These cuentos do not deal with the Honduran scene, but several are on the same level of excellence as the best of El Chele Amaya.

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SCIVIAS AND THE BURIAL SCENE IN FAUST II

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In the course of my studies within the area of twelfth century mysticism specifically relating to the personality and works of Germany's greatest medieval mystic and naturalist Hildegard von Bingen,¹ my attention was drawn repeatedly to certain textual and pictorial elements in the visio quarta of Book I of her first and principal work Scivias.² In their broad and general concepts, as well as in detail, these elements bear such a marked and clear resemblance to the Burial Scene in the second part of Faust II that it seems worthwhile to present an outline analysis of the situation. It is true that there exists a great body of Faust literature, sources from which motifs and concepts have been or may have been derived, and interpretations of the Faust text, but there always exists the possibility of adding to this body of literature.

No attempt at an analytical evaluation of the evidence submitted is made because, to the best of my knowledge, there do not exist critical discussions concerning possible relationships of certain elements in Hildegard von Bingen's visio quarta of Scivias to the Burial Scene in Faust II, or vice versa. In the Lemurs' Song one possible, but very tenuous, reference to the song of the Grave Diggers in Hamlet (V,1) may be seen; however, it is only one small part of the entire burial scene and has, as far as I know, no counterpart or similar textual relationship to any part of any visio in Scivias. It may, therefore, be safely disregarded. A much more comprehensive passage may, however, be used for discussion of both textual and pictorial elements as found in the visio quarta in Scivias. Therefore, because of an apparent lack of previous discussion, all references are based, with few exceptions, upon primary sources, namely, the Scivias elements just mentioned, together with the lower frame of the miniature illumination, Plate 7, pertaining directly to the passages in question;³ and also the general poetic concept of the Burial Scene in Faust II, together with the parallel artistic concept evident in the drawings, the "Federzeichnungen" made by Friedrich Moritz Retzsch,⁴ as they pertain to the elements of the Burial Scene here stressed.

Briefly expressed, my thesis is that Goethe may have found one of the sources of his Burial Scene, if not the principal source, in the Rupertsberg Codex of Hildegard von Bingen's Scivias.⁵

Let me say a few words about the background of the Burial Scene as both Hildegard von Bingen and Goethe saw it in relation to the atmosphere of the spirit world. A comparison of the pertinent passages

in the visio quarta with the general concept of the struggle between the forces of Hell (the "dark spirits," the later demons and/or devils, and other subservient spirits) and also those of the Lord (angels), would require, first of all, that we realize once more the significance of the world of spirits to the entire drama. The drama is, as it were, suspended in that world;⁶ so is the mystic philosophy of Hildegard.⁷ All three spheres of spirits are subject to poetical and mystical exploitation: 1, the sphere of light with its spirits of light, namely, the hierarchy of angels; 2, the sphere of darkness with its demons and devils, that is, the hierarchy of Hell, which is clearly indicated; and 3, the sphere of nature spirits, the elemental spirits. Certainly, within the framework of this broad reference we should recall the significance attached to the derivation of these spheres.⁸ We recall that in the pre-exilic literature of the Jews there are no such creatures as wicked angels, only good angels; that these had their tasks assigned to them, which they performed without the slightest evidence of disobedience; that there were two Satans: one the Dark Angel, Samael, the Angel of Death, who slew the first-born in every Egyptian household before the Exodus, and the other, the Satan of Temptation, the Accuser, the Tester, who had the task of testing the Lord's creation, a role clearly reflected in the Satan of the Book of Job and modified in Goethe's "Prolog in Heaven." We recall that the fall of the angels--a legend apparently of ancient Persian origin and which has its attachment in the rebellion of Angromainyus, the supreme ruler of darkness, against Ahura Mazda, the supreme ruler of light--created the dichotomy in the world of spirits which is now inhabited by angels of light on the one hand, and by demons and/or devils on the other. We recall that this myth found its way into Jewish literature apparently sometime during the early post-exilic period, by way of Jewish folklore. In the minds and oral traditions of the pre-Christian Jews it appears side by side with all the traditional and religious concepts germane to the angel world. As a result of this parallelism, we recall that under the influence of the spreading and rising Christian faith the ancient Persian demon and devil world experiences a change of its inner constitution and external make-up and is gradually bent to conform to the new Christian concepts relating to the nature and function of the several components of the spirit world. Hildegard von Bingen seems to recognize also a clearly defined sphere of Christian or God-related spirits (the traditional angels), and a realm of "dark spirits"--not devils or demons of the Persian persuasion but similar to Goethe's Mephistopheles, who is, aside from other interesting possibilities, "part of the darkness which brought forth the light." In other words, these "dark spirits" seem to be pre-creation creatures. However, in her Physica⁹ she also presents us with nature spirits. In a final stage, at least for Goethe's fifteenth and sixteenth century sources of his Faust, Agrippa, the German theologian and physician (1486?-1535) conceived of a collision of the world of the fallen angels (demons and

devils) with the man-friendly elemental spirits of Paracelsus.¹⁰

This vast cosmic backdrop, barely hinted at here, can now be reduced to more manageable proportions when one realizes that both Hildegard von Bingen and Goethe make use of this tripartite spirit world and that their respective burial and death scenes are identical in both worlds, that of the angels and that of the demons and/or devils.

After these preliminary remarks I can now go to the presentation of the evidence. One additional fact should be kept in mind, namely, the immediate moment of concern in the Burial Scene: the critical instant at which Mephistopheles and his helpers either will or will not be able to snatch the soul of Faust. This is the same moment which is also present textually and pictorially in the visio quarta of Scivias. My observations will be confined first to the textual evidence in both Faust and Scivias and then to the pictorial part.

The textual material of Goethe's Burial Scene presents, in brief outline, approximately the following situation: Faust is dead and his body is already in the open grave; Mephisto makes his bid to gain control of Faust's soul; not knowing if the soul will escape the body by way of the lower regions, the navel, or the orifices of the head (presumably the mouth), he summons hosts of spirits subservient to him--those of the straight and crooked horn, winged giants, fat ones, big-bellied ones, and others; however, as Faust's soul is about to leave the body,¹¹ the heavenly hosts appear, engage Mephistopheles and his hordes in a combat of roses, defeat them and carry Faust's Unsterbliches to heaven.¹²

The textual material in Hildegard's visio quarta, citing Migne, whose version of Scivias is unfortunately based on the mutilated copy of Le Fèvre (1513), reads as follows:

Cumque se hoc modo resolveret, quidam spiritus et lucidi et umbrosi venerunt qui socii conversationis ejus secundum quam in sede sua se moverat fuerunt, resolutionem ejus expectantes, ut, postquam se solvisset, eam secum abducerent. Et audiivi viventem vocem illis dicentem: secundum opera sua, de loco ad locum ducatur.¹³

Maura Böckeler has given us the most recent translation of Scivias into modern German:

Während sie sich auf diese Weise entlöste,¹⁴ kamen Geister herbei, lichte und finstere, die Genossen ihres Wandels, je nach den Bewegungen, die sie in ihrem Wohnsitze gemacht hatte. Sie erwarteten das Ende, um sie nach der Auflösung mit sich zu führen. Und ich hörte die Stimme des

Lebendigen zu ihnen sagen: "Ihren werken entsprechend soll sie von Ort zu Ort geführt werden."¹⁵

In the explanations and interpretations which are integral parts of the description of each vision we read, citing Migne again:

Quapropter cum se hoc modo resolvit quidam spiritus; et lucidi et umbrosi veniunt qui socii conversationis ipsius secundum quod in sede sua se movet sunt; quia in resolutione illa cum anima hominis habitaculum suum deserit angelici spiritus et boni et mali secundum justam et veram Dei ordinationem adsunt, qui inspectores operum illius secundum quod in corpore suo cum corpore operata est fuerunt resolutionem ejus expectantes ut postquam se exsolverit eam secum abducant, quoniam ipsi sententiam justi judicis de anima illa in separatione ejus a corpore praetolantur; ut ipsa a corpore soluta, eam ducant quo supernus judex judicaverit secundum merita operum illius ut ibi etiam, o homo, fideliter praemonstratum est.¹⁶

Maura Böckeler's translation reads as follows:

Deshalb kommen auch, während die Seele sich entlöst, lichte und finstere Geister herbei, die Genossen ihres Wandels, je nach den Bewegungen, die sie in ihrem Wohnsitz gemacht hat. Denn wenn bei der Auflösung des Menschen die Seele ihre Wohnstätte verläßt, sind nach der gerechten und wahrhaften Anordnung Gottes gute und böse Engel zugegen, die Zeugen all ihrer Werke, die sie in und mit dem Leibe vollbracht hat. Sie erwarten das Ende, um sie nach der Auflösung mit sich zu führen, das heißt, sie harren auf das Urteil des gerechten Richters, das er über diese Seele bei der Trennung vom Leibe fällen wird, und führen sie, sobald sie vom Körper befreit ist, an den Ort, dem sie nach ihren Verdiensten vom himmlischen Richter zugewiesen wird, wie dir, o Mensch, im Lichte des Glaubens gezeigt worden ist.¹⁷

This sets the stage for the general situation, at least textually and in so far as the problem of time, perhaps the precise moment of the soul's separation from the body, is concerned. Naturally, the basic question is this: What will become of the soul when it leaves the body? This question is intimately related with a second one: If spirits of various sorts are present at death and it is the task of these to claim the soul for one reason or another, what sort of spirits will ultimately gain possession of it? Both Hildegard and Goethe answer these questions in the same manner. In the instances portrayed, both souls are saved, although both kinds of spirits are present and compete with one

another for the soul's possession. Goethe uses demons and/or devils of Hell, led by Mephistopheles, who in their turn are opposed by a chorus of angels; Hildegard uses angels of light and darkness.¹⁸ Common to both modes of treatment is the clearly discernible element of doubt that surrounds the fate of the soul upon leaving the body.¹⁹

Now I shall turn briefly to the pictorial material of the scene. Retzsch's "Federzeichnungen" (specifically the next to the last sketch of the series of eleven illustrating *Faust II*) are important in the sense that they are re-creations which might surely have won the poet's approval just as did those covering the first part of the drama; perhaps also because as a re-creation of a poetically painted picture the "Federzeichnung" in question contains so many details observed also in the manuscript illumination.

In the lower half of the "Federzeichnung" the hosts of Hell are seen arrayed around a centrally located open grave. The upper half is occupied by the hosts of Heaven. Mephistopheles stands near the left edge of the frame, between the two groups. The time of action is the moment immediately before the soul leaves the body. Turning our attention to the manuscript illumination, we find a very similar scene. Described in general terms, it depicts the struggle between the two groups of spirits--the dark and light, or the good and evil angels--for the possession of the human soul that is just departing through the oral orifice of the body. In specific terms, the body of man and its departing soul, in the lower center, are the focus of the viewer's attention. In the left foreground is a group of spirits rendered by the medieval artist in two pale tones, a light blue and a light green. These represent the "light spirits" or "good angels" of the text. A wing spreading from this group to a single angel in the middle of the upper frame is tan in color and possesses a duplicate primary feather extension. This extension is of the same light blue of most of the other angels and extends the entire length and above the single angel that may be considered to be descending from heaven. Incidentally, this descending angel is also two toned in color. Its garment is blue, its face green.²⁰ As a sign of respect for the human soul, it holds its hands hidden behind a tan-colored cloth.²¹ The soul itself, emerging from the body, is also light blue. The right foreground is occupied by a group of "dark spirits" or evil or bad angels. They appear on a flaming background which Baillet, the only commentator of the *Scivias* illuminations, speaks of as being Hell. The artistic elaboration of these dark figures suggests spirits, perhaps even demons and/or devils.²²

There is evidently a leader in this group. One of them has left the group and, standing alone in front of the others and behind the reclining body, is reaching for the soul with his right hand and grasping it by its

foot.²³ When one associates the idea of what is just or good with the color light blue and assumes that the soul in this illumination is one that is destined to be saved, and yet realizes that the "dark spirits" have gained a definite hold over it, there is clearly the element of doubt about the immediate fate of the soul. Baillet, describing this seventh miniature illumination which he entitles "Mort, Enfer et Ciel," says:

L'âme n'a plus qu'à s'envoler vers la patrie. Autour de son agonie, les diables veillent, anxieux de la voir échapper à jamais. Leur chef, plus osé, s'approche, saisit par un pied et par une main la proie qu'il convoite. Mais, les Anges, respectueux, reçoivent leur soeur entre leurs mains voilées de lin ou d'écarlate. Ce n'est pas pour elle que Lucifer, à cheval sur la gueule de Léviathan, attise de son double crochet les flammes de la géhenne. Elle, durant l'éternité, habitera la cité céleste où les tuniques sont tissées d'or, où tous les coeurs s'abreuvent de délices à contempler le Fils de l'Homme au milieu des arbres paradisiaques et sous la droite du Très-Haut. La concupiscence, fruit du péché originel, n'empêche donc pas l'âme, libre malgré sa faiblesse, de parvenir à sa fin surnaturelle, pourvu que, dans ses combats, elle s'appuie constamment sur la grâce de Dieu méritée à l'homme par la Rédemption.²⁴

Clearly, this description agrees in its essentials with the textual material, although two minor points of difference can readily be seen. The first deals with the designation diabls, "devils." Hildegard nowhere tells us that these "dark spirits" are devils. Her spiritus et lucidi et umbrosi are clearly messengers of God who must perform the task of guiding the soul to the place designated for it by God. It is their constant and doubtless their only task. We can only conclude that Baillet took it upon himself to recast the nature of these spirits in the orthodox Christian mold. The second difference lies in the fact that Baillet speaks definitely of a leader of the band, leur chef and adds a second "great one," namely Lucifer, again à Christian figure. On the other hand, Hildegard, although having this vision interpreted artistically with a leader of the band, does not speak of one in the accompanying text.

However, despite these two points of difference, there are so many similarities, even coincidences, that it is possible to make a number of observations. Of course, most striking is the medieval artist's pictorial interpretation of this scene in the text. Emphasizing textual points of agreement there are: 1, the general theme, that is, the departure of the human soul from its body after death; 2, the pres-

ence of three separate groups or groupings: light spirits, dark spirits, and the body-soul-descending angel group; 3, the time of departure, during the body's decomposition; 4, the element of doubt at the moment; 5, the ultimate fate of the soul; and 6, the divine judgment in the background of the event. All these points are also found in Goethe's Burial Scene. Pictorially, there is much the same situation: 1, the general theme; 2, the presence of the three groups; 3, the indicated clash of the two groups of spirits; 4, the manner in which the soul leaves the body; 5, the momentary doubt; 6, the implied ultimate salvation of the soul; and 7, the use by the descending angel of an object that symbolizes an attitude of respect and service toward the soul.²⁵ All of these points, with the exception of point 4, are also found in Retzsch's "Federzeichnung." Finally there are several observations possible that may relate the manuscript illumination to the broad textual concept on Goethe's Burial Scene. These are: 1, the manner in which the soul leaves the body; 2, the use of a chief angel or a chief demon; 3, the use by the descending angel or angels of objects having symbolical value: the cloth and the roses. At least ten points of similarity may be enumerated: the general theme, the presence of three groups, the presence of two opposing groups, the indicated clash between these two groups, the state of the body at the time of the soul's departure, the manner of the soul's departure, the momentary doubt, the ultimate salvation of the soul, the presence of leaders, and the use of an object or objects by the angel or angels.

Such a factual alignment should be sufficient reason per se for more than only casual interest on our part. However, there is an additional bit of evidence which holds our attention. It is well known that Goethe was deeply interested in fifteenth and sixteenth century literary works and manuscripts. Jantz reminds us that, although Goethe mentioned only a few suggestive sources for that part of Faust written before 1775, he gave us more ample references to background material for the second part of the drama. Furthermore, it is known that the Rupertsberg Codex was transferred to the Nassauische Landesbibliothek in Wiesbaden in 1814, where Goethe saw it.²⁶ In Kunst und Wissenschaft am Rhein und Main he remarks: "Ein altes Manuskript, die Visionen der heiligen Hildegard enthaltend, ist merkwuerdig." It is also known that he made a summary sketch of the second part of Faust in the year 1816, that is, two years after the Codex had been transferred to Wiesbaden. There may, of course, exist no relationship between these dates; yet their mention may, by the same token, not be without merit. There may be no grounds for a debate as to whether Goethe read any of the text portions of the manuscript; and there may be no more grounds than can be accepted on the basis of pure inference that he paid special attention to plate 7. Yet, if he did, it is well known that visual impressions are more lasting than those

of the other senses, and that pictorial impressions have, generally speaking, a longer life than those of the printed word.

In closing, I should like to repeat what was said at the outset: no attempt has been made to prove categorically that the poet found the source for his Burial Scene in the text or miniature illumination of the visio quarta of the Liber Primus of Hildegard's Scivias. Certain pertinent observations have been presented as objectively as possible, showing that Hildegard von Bingen furnishes us with at least ten points of coincidence with Goethe's Burial Scene in Faust II.

NOTES

1. Hildegard von Bingen, born in 1098, for many years directed the cloister which she founded at Rupertsberg, near Bingen. From early childhood she was subject to visions which she later recorded. She died, not sainted but called St. Hildegard, in 1179. For accounts of her life see: Wolfgang Stammeler, Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters, Verfasserlexikon, Bd. II; Francis Merschman in The Catholic Encyclopedia, VII; J. P. Schmelzeis; Das Leben und Wirken der hl. Hildegard (Freiburg, 1879); the Vita auctoribus Godefrido et Theodrico in J. P. Migne's Patrologiae cursus completus, Tom. 197, col. 91-130. See translation into modern German by Johannes Buehler: Schriften der Heiligen Hildegard von Bingen (Leipzig, 1922), p. 18 ff.
2. Scivias is considered part of a trilogy consisting of Scivias, written between 1141 and 1147; the Liber Vitae meritorum, written between 1158 and 1163; and the Liber Divinorum operum, written between 1163 and 1170. No complete bibliography is extant; however, partial bibliographies exist, as in Maura Böckeler's translation into modern German, Scivias: Wisse die Wege (Salzburg, 1954), pp. 398, 399.
3. A number of the 26 illuminations actually form groups whose individual members are related in their symbolical or allegorical content describing various portions of the visio-text.
4. Friedrich August Moritz Retzsch (1779-1857) was apparently the only illustrator of Goethe's Faust who elicited the poet's enthusiastic comments when he saw the "Federzeichnungen" covering the first part of the drama. These appeared in the fall of 1816, at Cotta, Stuttgart. The eleven "Federzeichnungen" covering the second part of the drama appeared in 1836, four years after Goethe's death.

5. The Rupertsberg Codex: the copy of the Codex made before the original was sent to Dresden for safekeeping during the last war.
6. It is well known that Goethe was an assiduous student of magic and the spirit world.
7. In this, as in other respects, she falls in line with the medieval Christian philosophy promulgated by such men as Erigena, Origen and Nemesius.
8. Compare Rabbi Leo Jung, Fallen Angels in Jewish, Christian and Mohammedan Literature, The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning (Philadelphia, 1926).
9. See Buehler, pp. 165, 167.
10. Those of fire: salamanders; of air: sylphs; of water: undines; of the mineral sphere: kobolts (gnomes).
11. The exact time and the manner in which the soul leaves the body after death, as also when it enters the body at or after conception, were subject to discussion during the Middle Ages. See Böckeler, footnote, pp. 129, 130. Compare this with the manner in which Goethe refers to this in the Burial Scene: "Wann, wie und wo, das ist die leidige Frage."
12. Goethe sketched this scene in the following words: "Leiche. Lemuren legen ihn ins Grab. Ziehen sich zurück. Satane. Verwesung. Die Seele entflieht. Später(?) Satane in Angst zu erhaschen. Gesang fern. Mephistopheles. Ärgerlich. Engel nach Wortstreit. Die Engel streuen Rosen. Die Satane hauchen. Sie welken(?). Die Rosen in Flammen verwandelt flammen auf. Gegen die Satane. Diese entfliehen. Meph hält aus. Liebespein. Engelschaaren. Satane drohen. Meph ab zur Appelation. Da Capo. Himmel. Christus Mutter. Evangelisten und alle Heiligen. Gericht über Faust. Fr. Strehlke, Paralipomena zu Goethes Faust, (Stuttgart, 1891), pp. 136, 137.
13. Migne, 421 BC.
14. Sie refers to the human soul.
15. Böckeler, p. 126. I cite Böckeler for two reasons: 1, her translation is based on the Rupertsberg Codex; 2, no translation of Hildegard's Scivias exists at present in English.

16. Migne, 429 AB.
17. Böckeler, p. 134.
18. It is questionable that Hildegard meant her "dark spirits" to be demons and/or devils. While she is strongly devil-conscious and uses the word spiritus with the connotation of evil when it is meant to refer to the inhabitants of Hell, she is so clear in the use of that word as meaning messengers of God who wait upon His command, an idea which relates to pre-exilic Jewish concepts, that they seem more closely related to the pre-creation Mephistopheles.
19. The ultimate redemption of Hildegard's human soul is inferred in the pictorial interpretation.
20. The significance of these colors is subject to closer examination. Colors have a definite symbolical value in medieval mysticism, and it is known that Hildegard uses the descriptive values of colors so abundantly that her entire "Heilsgebäude" is a most colorful structure.
21. "Les mains voilées en signe de respect sont fréquentes dans l'art des pays rattachés par quelques liens à l'Orient chrétien," Cahier, "Couronne de Lumière d'Aix-la-Chapelle," à la page 46 du tome III des Mélanges d'archéologie, in Dom Louis Baillet, Les Miniatures du "Scivias" de Ste. Hildegarde. Monuments et Mémoires publiés par l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres (Paris, 1911), XIX, p. 68.
22. As such they would be reminiscent of the spirits of chaos of which Mephistopheles is a part.
23. The shape of the soul is that of the body. According to medieval Christian philosophy the soul occupies every part of the body, therefore must have its shape. Hildegard von Bingen shares this concept.
24. Baillet, pp. 67, 68.
25. Ancient Jewish accounts tell of the guarding and serving of man by God-appointed angels; how they prepared and served his food for him, etc. See Jung, p. 56.
26. Goethe's Werke, herausgegeben im Auftrage der Groszherzogin Sophie von Sachsen, 34. Bd. (Wimar, 1902), p. 102. This

reference is also found in Maura Böckeler, p. 389.

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TRANSLATIONS OF THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

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Luther's translation of the Bible is generally considered a cornerstone in the development of the German language and literature. The literary historian Wilhelm Scherer in fact calls it the "greatest literary event"¹ not only of the sixteenth but also of the centuries immediately preceding and following because it laid the foundation for a uniform culture for all strata of society through its inexhaustible resources of edification and through its being the noble and indestructible canons of the language itself. It is even unqualifiedly claimed that Luther in his linguistic powers exceeded as gigantically his predecessors as he excelled in the religious and spiritual battles of that age. Wolfgang Stammeler, while acknowledging the Bible translation as his mightiest literary deed, however, seems to give a fairer and more just appraisal of Luther's language when he puts the reformer at the end and peak of a long tradition.²

That the German language had not taken on deeper and wider significance before the Reformation, hence had not achieved greater perfection in form and expressiveness, lay essentially in two factors. Those who should have been the leaders in language and literature were not at all interested in the vernacular as such. This applied to the ecclesiastical as well as to the secular bearers of culture. The former were entirely engulfed by the affairs and language of their church, the latter by the exemplars of their worldly prototypes of the ancient world. The cultivation of the language of the populace was left mainly in the hands of the working middle class, or when the vernacular was used by the Church it was in further efforts to keep the people in check or at least under the dominance of the ecclesiastical institution.

To make the Reformation a popular movement Luther had to use the language of the people. The experience of the Humanists must have taught him not to wrangle with the minds of the intelligentsia alone. Battles within this stratum of the learned remained merely engagements of wits and dialectics. The Reformer's so-called "demagogische Begabung"³ made him use the most effective weapon that the masses had to offer, that is, the language that the people understood and used. No wonder he says that he descended into the alleys, into the homes, into the workshops, into the daily natural settings of his greatest constituency; that there he listened, to return imbued with the picturesque and vivid concreteness of their speech. His own language in sermon and writing is therefore far removed from the abstractness of the lecture hall. Concerning the Scriptures, he believed that the divinely revealed word of God as given in the Bible was given to the Jewish people so that they could understand it. So why not do this again in his own sixteenth century? Why not bring the Bible back to

the experience and settings of the men of his own age?

Whenever Luther's "volkstümliche Sprache" is extolled and his concreteness in translation is shown by example, as will be seen later, one unmistakable source of this concreteness is seldom if ever mentioned: the language of the Scriptures themselves, namely, Hebrew. Whenever the translation of the Bible, including the New Testament, is to be considered, it is well to remember Luther's own words in the Colloquia: "Ohne diese Sprache (i. e., Hebräisch) kann keine Erkenntnis der Schrift da sein, denn auch das Neue Testament, wiewohl es griechisch geschrieben ist, ist es doch voll von hebräischer Redeweise."⁴ While he praises the inimitability of the Hebrew in its simplicity and majesty, he recognizes also the fact that no language has "so viel verblümte, figürliche Worte" as this ancient tongue. He somehow seems to characterize his own speech when he praises the Hebrew in the very Vorrede auf den Psalter:

Es ist die hebräische Sprache so reich, dass keine Sprache sie mag genugsam erlangen; denn sie hat viel Wörter, die da singen, loben, preisen, ehren, freuen, betrüben etc. heissen, da wir kaum Eines haben. Und sonderlich in göttlichen heiligen Sachen ist sie reich mit Worten, dass sie wohl zehn Namen hat, da sie Gott mit nennet, da wir nicht mehr haben, denn das einige Wort: Gott, dass sie wohl billig eine heilige Sprache heissen mag.⁵

He even goes so far as to say that it is not possible to understand the Scriptures without knowing Hebrew,⁶ much less to preach and to expound them correctly without the help of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.⁷

Although Luther used the assistance of his friends, like Aurogallus, Melanchthon, Cruciger, Bugenhagen, Jonas and Rörer, experts in diverse biblical tongues, he was himself very proficient because of his own constant reading of the Bible in the original.⁸ This latter exercise applies particularly to the Psalms, as he admits: "Mit diesem Buche habe ich mich von Jugend auf beschäftigt, ergötzt und geübt, und, Gott sei Dank, nicht ohne grosse Frucht . . . dass ich durch Ergötzung und Nachdenken über die Psalmen unter dem Segen des Heiligen Geistes erlangt habe."⁹

Luther's fondness for the Psalter may have been due to several reasons apart from the fact that in his monastery days the observance of the canonical hours consisted in the main in the reciting of psalms. Poetry (and the book of Psalms is reputedly such) according to his own words had a greater influence upon him than the prose of even a Cicero or a Demosthenes. No one will deny that Luther was a poet in his own right.¹⁰

What finer characterizations of the Psalms could be given than those in the Kurze Anleitung, wie der Psalter nützlich zu lesen sei,

of 1525:

Der Psalter hat vor anderen Büchern der heiligen Schrift die Tugend an sich, dass er nicht allein allerlei Gutes lehrt und Exempel vorlegt, sondern auch aufs allerfeinste mit auserwählten Worten zeigt und weiset, wie man Gottes Gebote solle halten und erfüllen, das ist, wie ein Herz geschickt sein soll das einen rechten Glauben habe, und wie ein gut Gewissen sich halte gegen Gott in allen Zufällen, wie es zu trösten und aufzurichten sei. Summa, der Psalter ist eine rechte Schule, darinnen man den Glauben und gut Gewissen zu Gott lernt, übt und stärkt . . . Wer nun den Psalter recht lesen und verstehen will, der muss auf diese zwei Stücke drinnen Acht haben, so wird er finden, welch ein süß und fein Büchlein es sei, und wird drinnen lernen allerlei Lehre, Trost, Stärke, Freude und alle Wonnen, wie es sein Herz möchte wünschen.¹¹

The translation of the Psalms was, therefore, for Luther a genuine labor of love. His translations began in 1517 with the Seven Penitentiary Psalms and continued almost uninterruptedly until the whole Psalter appeared in 1524. Other editions and emendations followed. In 1531 there was published an edition which Luther announced to be "dem Deutschen näher, dem Hebräischen ferner."¹²

It is interesting to note that Luther's rendering of the Twenty-third Psalm is most frequently given as an example of his ability in translation and his word power. This is especially the case in anthologies in which Der Herr ist mein Hirte is contrasted with the Latin Dominus regit me and with older German translations like the "Zainer" (1475) and/or the "Koburger" (1483) Der Herr regieret mich.¹³ Murtfeld even speaks of the "Sprachgebundenheit und Rückständigkeit des Spätmittelalters" and recommends specifically the use of Luther's version of the Twenty-third Psalm in contrast with the Latin and the older German text, "Als Beweis für die sklavische Nachahmungsweise der vorlutherischen Bibel gegenüber Luthers souveräner Eindeutschungsgewalt."¹⁴ However, nothing could be further from the point than this very example. In fact it is this writer's contention that in these procedures there are at least two important considerations:

1. Luther made his translation of the Twenty-third Psalm (and others) from the original Hebrew of the Gerson-Brescia edition of 1494, and not from the Latin Vulgate; therefore the Hebrew and not the Latin text should be given in comparison to show his ability and also his dependency in translation; this is never done.

2. The earlier German translations are based on the Latin and not on the Hebrew original, hence cannot rightly be contrasted with Luther's German text; these juxtapositions are therefore entirely misleading. I do not propose to deny any of Luther's "Redegewandtheit," but Der Herr ist mein Hirte is not a fair example, because it is the verbal rendering from the Hebrew text, which the older German translations are not. The older German Der Herr regieret mich is the verbal rendering of the Latin Dominus regit me.

While it is not the intention here to point out word by word the difference between the original Hebrew and Luther's translation (and more exact verbal versions like De Wette's¹⁵ on the one hand, and the Vulgate and earlier and later Catholic vernacular translations on the other, it is this writer's belief that the first line suffices for the point in question. Concerning Luther's text it may easily be asserted that he had a good and penetrating understanding of the Hebrew. More than that, he had a keen insight, unusual for his time, into the temper and soul of his ancient models. He had that same understanding concerning his own German Volksgenossen, for whom he so ardently and devoutly did his work. To be equal to his great task he had the necessary empathy, as he himself said so well: "Es gehöret dazu, (i. e., dolmetschen) ein recht frum, trew, vleissig, forchtsam, Christlich, geleret, erfarn, geübet hertz."¹⁶

The language of both these groups, Hebrew and German, with their picturesqueness and concreteness, similes and metaphors, was closely akin to their development. Images and ideas of the shepherds were native to both, hence the favor they found with both peoples. Luther did not invent the expression and symbol of the shepherd; he merely went back to an original usage. And yet, while the Twenty-third Psalm is most widely used as the "Psalm of Psalms" among Protestants today, it is already losing its meaning for the younger American generation. In one Sunday School class of eight-to-ten year olds not one youngster knew what a shepherd was. One wonders at what age both David and Luther knew the significance and implication of the word.

Concerning the Vulgate and the "sklavisch" German translations made from it, this may be said: Jerome, to whom the translation of the Bible was commissioned in Rome about the year 382, had lived long enough under the aegis of Rome to know that the primitivism of certain foreign idioms would not mean much to Christians living under the imperium Romanum. Jerome was well acquainted with the mood and convictions of his constituency. He also knew and used a Hebrew text; he even went to Palestine in order better to interpret Holy Writ. To translate idioms characteristic of a foreign and different culture must have caused grave concern to Jerome, just as it did later to Luther. Jerome should not be blamed for adapting an ancient text to the spirit of a later age by turning

the Hebrew equivalent of "Jehovah is my shepherd" into this imperial Roman version "Dominus regit me." His efforts in this respect have been praised by Jews and Christians alike, even by Luther.¹⁷

It is necessary to note here that Jerome made various translations of the Book of Psalms. His first effort in 382 became known as the Psalterium Romanum. The Psalterium Gallicum of four years later became the current and authentic Vulgate version of the Roman Catholic Church. In Palestine in 392 Jerome engaged in a more restrictive venture and one closer to the Hebrew, which is known as Psalterium Juxta Hebraeos Hieronymi.¹⁸ Characteristic of these three translations is that the third of Jerome's attempts is a more latinized Hebrew version, as is apparent already in the very first phrase: "Dominus pascit me," which could be translated as "The Lord shepherds (or pastures) me." However, this rendering did not meet the favor of the official Church.

How would Luther have rendered the Twenty-third Psalm into Latin? The reformer fortunately has answered this query in a study of about 1530.¹⁹ Since this study is written altogether in Latin, one may be tempted to call this Luther's Latin version of the psalm. It is interesting to read this scholarly dissertation on the relative linguistic and allegorical merits of the official Vulgate (Jerome's second Psalterium Gallicum) and what he calls Jerome's version (namely, Jerome's third Psalterium Juxta Hebraeos) in contrast to the Hebrew.

Taking the Vulgate phrase by phrase Luther proceeds to analyze and explain. He begins: "Dominus regit me. Melius hebraice: Dominus pastor meus, seu pascit me, hoc est, Jesus Christus verus Deus, et ipse solus est pastor meus, non alio cibo me pascens, quam se ipso . . ." But in the next verse he concedes in reference to a passage from the Song of Solomon I, 7: "'Ubi pascas, ubi cubes in meridie!'" Quae duo verba hic regit et collocavit transtulerunt, cum sint eadem." While Luther maintains that the Hebrew expression my shepherd or shepherds me is better, nevertheless he concedes the correctness of regit me ("rules me"). Nowhere in this study does Luther militate against or berate the Vulgate text, not even in verse five in which a whole phrase, quam praeclarus est ("how goodly it is"), is added as an explanation. Luther throughout favors and follows Jerome's third translation, except by some error in verse six (in longitudine), which is not the Vulgate's text but Jerome's first and third versions. Throughout this study Luther also pays Jerome a compliment by calling him "beatus Hieronymus."²⁰

Concerning the earlier German translations, dependent as they were on one official version, that is, the Vulgate, the translators had to take its text as they found it. Any deviation from the obvious meaning, any liberty in allegory or metaphor could lead only to anathema. The picture

of the shepherd, although found in other connections in the Bible, remained therefore lost to the users of this psalm. The difference between Luther and his predecessors is not that the reformer heeded his own counsel when he said, "Man mus nicht die buchstaben in der lateinischen sprachen fragen, wie man sol Deutsch reden . . . Den die lateinischen buchstaben hindern uns der massen seer, gut deutsch zu reden,"²¹ but that he went directly to the original languages and used the Latin text more or less by way of departure. His predecessors and opponents could not do this.

It is significant that the official Vulgate still retains the Dominus regit me. The vernacular English Catholic, so called Douay, version has a note concerning verse one: "Ruleth me. In Hebrew, Is my shepherd viz., to feed, guide, and govern me."²² The Council of Trent proclaimed the Vulgate (Jerome's second version, the Psalterium Gallicum) the authentic and authoritative edition, approved by long use through many centuries, which no one was to reject under any pretext.²³ It may also be said in defense of the Latin that, while this language may not have the quaintness and figurativeness of the Hebrew and the German, nevertheless there is a power and assurance in the terseness and definiteness in the Dominus regit me which must have been felt through the ages and which must have exercised its lure as well as its music on countless generations of monastic dwellers for whom this psalm was a weekly prayer. The precise and assertive boldness of the Roman system seems fully to have taken refuge in this one expression, and for the humble subordinate in this hierarchical scheme there are no doubts left as to the meaning and inclusiveness of this line. Therefore he may cherish it also with equal and almost proverbial candor and faith. On the other hand, one may ask whether the reason for the less frequent use of the vernacular catholic version is to be sought not only in the prosaism of its rendering, but also in the distracting dichotomy between the pontifical or authoritarian doctrine veiled in this religious expression and practical democratic everyday living.

NOTES

1. Wilhelm Scherer, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur (Berlin, 1915), p. 278.
2. Wolfgang Stammer, Von der Mystik zum Barock (Stuttgart, 1927), p. 284.
3. Stammer, op. cit., p. 281.
4. Johann Georg Walch, Dr. Martin Luther's Sämmtliche Schriften, (St. Louis, Missouri, 1880-1910), XXII, p. 1543.
5. Schriften, IV, p. 1 ff.

6. Schriften, XIV, p. 1416.
7. Schriften, XIX, p. 1336.
8. Schriften, IV, p. 208.
9. Brief No. 2369 an Eoban Hessus, Wittenberg, den 1, August, 1537, Schriften, XXIIb, p. 2182.
10. Compare for example Luther's well known "Eine Feste Burg ist unser Gott . . ." and "Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir" as poetic transcriptions of psalms XLVI and CXXX in Karl Goedeke, Dichtungen von D. Martin Luther (Leipzig, 1883).
11. Schriften, IV, pp. 218-221.
12. For Luther's manifold translations see Schriften IV, p. 1, Note f.
13. Werner Burkhard, Schriftwerke deutscher Sprache (Aarau, 1945), I, pp. 250-251; Arnold E. Berger, Grundzüge evangelischer Lebensformung, Deutsche Literatur, Reihe Reformation (Leipzig, 1930), I, p. 293.
14. Rudolf Murtfeld, Handbuch für den Deutschunterricht (Berlin, 1938), II, p. 397.
15. Die Helige Schrift, dritte verbesserte Ausgabe (Heidelberg, 1839).
16. Martin Luther, "Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen," in Grundzüge evangelischer Lebensformung, Deutsche Literatur, Reihe Reformation, I, ed. Arnold E. Berger (Leipzig, 1930), p. 280.
17. Outstanding examples are given in the introduction to the Biblia Hexapla edited by E. R. DeLevante (New York, 1901). Note especially Heinz Bluhm, The Evolution of Luther's Translation of the Twenty-third Psalm, GR. XXVI, pp. 251-258. This study, which is an appreciation of Luther's work as literary art, concludes: "Though it is and remains but a translation, of course, it was artistically reborn in the gradual process of its complete vernacularization."
18. Heinz Bluhm, The "Douche" Sources of Coverdale's Translations of the Twenty-third Psalm, JEGP, XLVI, pp. 53-62, gives these three versions of Jerome in contrast with Coverdale's and other contemporary attempts at translation.

19. Explicatio Trium Sequentium Psalmorum de autographo D. Lutheri expressa est. Erlangen Ausgabe, exeg. opp., XVII, pp. 276-287. Yale University was kind enough to supply the author with a photostat copy. It is to be noted, however, that in this edition the old enumeration of the psalms is still in vogue, so that it is here the Twenty-second Psalm. A new German translation is to be found in Schriften, IV, pp. 1626-1639. A note on p. 1626 gives further bibliographical data.
20. See W. Schwarz, Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation (Cambridge University Press, 1955), p. 202 ff.
21. Martin Luther, Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen, op. cit., p. 277.
22. The Holy Bible translated from the Latin Vulgate, (Baltimore, 1914), Psalm 22, p. 291.
23. Authenticam esse et summa autoritatis, haec ipsa vetus et Vulgate editio, quae longe tot saeculorum usu in ipsa ecclesia probata est, in publicis lectionibus, disputationibus, praedicationibus, et expositionibus pro authentica habeatur, et ut nemo eam rejicere quovis pretextu audeat vel praesumat. Council of Trent, Ses. 4, Cano. 2; quoted in Biblia Hexapla, Prolegomenon, p. LII.

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RECENT BOOKS IN THE FIELD OF
CLASSICAL LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE*

F. E. Adcock. Caesar as a Man of Letters. New York:Cambridge University Press, 1956. Pp. vii, 115. \$2.00.

Actually this work deals more with Caesar as a soldier and politician than as a man of letters. There are discussions of the commentarius and the historia as genres, the objectives and content of the Commentaries, Caesar as a soldier, Caesar's style and personality, and the period of the composition and publication of the Gallic and Civil War. The work would have been much stronger had Adcock stuck closer to his title, but it is nevertheless a useful addition to the corpus of Caesarian literature.

James T. Allen and Gabriel Italie. A Concordance to Euripides. Berkeley:University of California Press, 1954. Pp. xi, 686. \$10.00.

Meticulous and exhaustive, this great concordance will be of substantial value for Euripidean studies. Nouns and adjectives are listed under the nominative singular, verbs under the first person singular. Only selected examples of certain very common words are used. The University of California Press has spared no expense in producing this invaluable reference work.

Franz Altheim. Römische Geschichte. 2d ed. Berlin:De Gruyter, 1956. ("Sammlung Götschen," nos. 19, 677.) 2 v. DM. 2.40 ea.

The first volume of this work extends from the beginnings to the Battle of Pydna (168 B.C.), the second to the Battle of Actium (31 B.C.). The main outlines of political developments are traced, but there is also a strong emphasis on religious, social, and economic aspects of Roman history. There is a brief but useful index, but there are no maps or bibliography.

Franz Altheim. Römische Religionsgeschichte. 2d ed. Berlin:De Gruyter, 1956. ("Sammlung Götschen," nos. 1035, 1052.) 2 v. DM \$2.40 ea.

*In each subsequent issue of the Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly significant books received for review will be listed with short annotations. The classical, mediaeval, Romance and Germanic fields will be covered in rotation.

This latest edition of Altheim's almost classic work, which has also appeared in English and French, again emphasizes the complex interrelationships of the Roman, Italian and Mediterranean religions, but proper attention is also given to the peculiar developments of the Roman religion that distinguish it from others. The first volume, "Grundlagen und Grundbegriffe," deals with the religions of pre-Roman Italy, while the second volume, "Der geschichtliche Ablauf," traces Roman religion from the founding to Constantine. The chapters on the sun cult and on Constantine are innovations in this edition.

P. Aurelianus, O.F.M. Cap. (A.L.J. Raessens). De Verhouding van Godsdienst en Ethiek in Homerus. Nijmegen:Centrale Drukkerij, 1955. Pp. xiv, 120.

While it is generally assumed that Homer's gods were quite impersonal and that the ethics of the heroes are wholly man-made, Father Aurelianus makes a convincing argument to the contrary. He feels that Homer's characters consider ethics a part of their religion and that their actions were influenced by respect for their gods.

W. Beare. The Roman Stage. 2d ed. London:Methuen, 1955. Pp. xiv, 365. 37s. 6d.

This revision of an important work will be widely used. Documentation has been brought up to date, many smaller points revised, and the chapters on Terence and the Greek New Comedy rewritten. Even though Beare's views are not universally accepted, all students of Roman drama will find the book invaluable as a reference work.

M. L. Clarke. The Roman Mind. Cambridge, Mass.:Harvard University Press, 1956. Pp. viii, 168. \$3.75.

This collection of essays proposes to describe the impact of Greek culture on Roman and to show how the Roman adapted Greek ideals to his own civilization. Chronologically, Clarke covers the Age of Cicero, the Augustan period, and the first two centuries of the Empire. He concludes with a note on the Roman ideal of humanitas as a standard for the art of living.

John Gould. The Development of Plato's Ethics. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1955. Pp. xiii, 241. \$4.75.

The first part of this work deals with the teachings of Socrates, the second with the Laws, and the last with the middle and later dialogues. Gould argues that Plato rejected the fundamental optimism of Socrates expressed in the idea that man can attain a firm grasp on moral knowledge

in his terrestrial existence. According to Gould, Plato's basic convictions changed as he grew old, and he despaired of man's possibilities as a social being.

Moses Hadas. Ancilla to Classical Reading. New York: Columbia University Press, 1954. Pp. xiii, 397. \$4.75.

The first part of this book deals with the physical book in antiquity, the rôle of the poet, biographers of poets, criticism, and literary scholarship. In the second part, "Literary Gossip," there is a large body of anecdotes, some true, some doubtful, and some fictitious, but all eminently useful to the teacher of literature. Here is a significant and useful handmaiden for all classical scholars.

Elfriede Huber-Abrahamowicz. Das Problem der Kunst bei Platon. Winterthur: P. G. Keller, 1954. Pp. vii, 64.

Plato's hostility to art is based on the dangers he sees in it. Huber-Abrahamowicz examines Plato's parallel between art and sophistic, the characteristics of art in their relation to the soul of the artist or lover of art, and the grounds for Plato's distrust of art.

H. A. K. Hunt. The Humanism of Cicero. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1954. Pp. viii, 221. \$4.75.

Hunt argues that Cicero's philosophical work is basically an effort to systematize the ancient thinkers whose work is expounded in his essays. The analysis of the philosophical essays is, in general, sound, and may serve as a useful point of departure for this group of Cicero's works.

H. D. F. Kitto. Form and Meaning in Drama: A Study of Six Greek Plays and "Hamlet". London: Methuen, 1956. Pp. ix, 341. 30 s.

This work consists of a careful analysis of Aeschylus' Oresteian trilogy and the Philoctetes, Antigone, and Ajax of Sophocles. There are, in addition, essays on "Greek and Elizabethan Tragedy," "Religious Drama and Its Interpretation," and a study of Hamlet as a religious drama. Kitto also views the work of the two Greek dramatists as religious rather than realistic or psychological works, and he finds that the key to each is the poet's concern with justice. Kitto is persuasive and at times remarkably clever, but his criticism is thoroughly sound.

H. Koller, Die Mimêsis in der Antike: Nachahmung, Darstellung, Ausdruck. Bern: A. Francke, 1954. ("Dissertationes Bernenses," Ser. I, Fasc. 5.) Pp. 235. Sw. Fr. 22.

The first part of this study deals with the etymology, use, and meaning of the term mimêsis. The latter part is concerned with the broad significance of the Pythagorean theories on the purpose of ritual dance and of the therapeutic significance of dance and music. He also goes into the rôle of mimêsis, especially as expressed in music, in literature and in philosophy. Here is an important study operating on the basis of a concept of Greek culture expressed in a single word but one which had a wide and enduring influence.

Martin P. Nilsson. Die hellenistische Schule. Munich:C. H. Beck, 1955. Pp. xi, 104; 8 pl. DM 9.

Based on inscriptions found in some fifty Greek cities, Nilsson emphasizes the rôle of the Greek gymnasium not only in preparing young men for citizenship through musical, physical, and academic studies but also as a medium for the transmission of Greek culture to those parts of the ancient world where the Greeks were a minority. The introductory chapter deals with the methods of elementary education and the Athenian ephebeia, but the bulk of the study is on the gymnasium. Nilsson emphasizes the adaptability of Greek educational methods to the needs of particular localities and times.

La notion du divin depuis Homère jusqu'à Platon. Sept exposés et discussions par H. J. Rose, Pierre Chantraine, Bruno Snell, Olof Gigon, H.D.F. Kitto, Fernand Chapouthier, W. J. Verdenius (Vandoeuvres-Genève, 8-13 septembre 1952). Vandoeuvres-Geneva (Switzerland):Fondation Hardt, 1954. ("Entretiens pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique," v. 1.) Pp. vii, 308. \$5.60.

This first volume of colloquies sponsored by the Fondation Hardt features seven scholars from five countries, each dealing separately with the Greek concept of to theion. Written in the world's three major languages and rich in content, mature in philosophical thought, this first of the Hardt Foundation series of conferences augurs well for future volumes.

Maurice Platnauer, ed. Fifty Years of Classical Scholarship. Oxford:Blackwell, 1954. Pp. xvi, 432. 3ls.6d.

This important work belongs on the reference shelf of every student of the humanities. The various chapters may properly be recorded here: 1, Homer; 2, Early Greek Lyric Poetry; 3, Greek Tragedy; 4, Greek Comedy; 5, Greek Philosophers; 6, Greek Historians; 7, Greek Orators and Rhetoric; 8, Hellenistic Poetry; 9, Roman Drama; 10, Late Republican Poetry; 11, Augustan Poets; 12, Roman Oratory; 13, Roman Historians; 14, Silver Latin poetry. See the important review-article in The Classical Weekly, XLIX (1956), 113-128, 145-160.

Max Pohlenz. Die griechische Tragödie. 2d ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1954. 2 v. DM 50.

First published in 1930, this new edition of Pohlenz' great work contains a number of smaller changes in the first volume and extensive revision of the bibliographical apparatus in the second ("Erläuterungen"). Just as in the first edition, each play is discussed in considerable detail, with summaries and sections on generalization. All notes are relegated to the second volume. Pohlenz' critical approach is straightforward and objective, measuring all his comments against the known facts rather than straining points to discover obscure references and allusions.

C. H. Roberts. Greek Literary Hands, 350 B.C. - A.D. 400. New York:Oxford University Press, 1956. Pp. xix, 24; 24 pl. \$4.80.

This initial volume in the "Oxford Palaeographical Series," of which some twelve volumes are planned, is the first step in providing an up-to-date substitute for E. Maunde Thompson's Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography. The twenty-four plates, containing descriptions illustrating fifty-seven manuscripts, begin with the Timotheus papyrus once in Berlin and attributed to the fourth century B.C. and end with the Codex Sinaiticus. Descriptions provide information on date, provenance, characteristics of the hands, and comparison of specimens and other manuscripts. There is a carefully selected bibliography at the beginning of the work.

W. B. Stanford. The Ulysses Theme. Oxford:Blackwell, 1954. Pp. x, 292. 3ls.6d.

The first five chapters of this work deal with the Homeric poems, the next six with other Greek and Latin authors, three more with modern treatments of the Ulysses theme, and two with the nature of myth and creative writing. Stanford feels that the wide use of the Ulysses theme is due primarily not only to the exhaustive treatment of the story by Homer, but also to some extent by the tendency of writers to identify themselves with this hero. Although primarily for a scholarly audience, portions of this book can also be read with profit by beginners.

J. A. K. Thomson. Classical Influences on English Prose. London:George Allen & Unwin, 1956. Pp. xiii, 303. 16s.

Thomson has translated a representative group of Greek and Latin authors and annotated them to illustrate classical influences on the prose of our own vernacular. He finds many convincing examples of parallels with English prose, although there is none of the detailed scholarship and careful documentation that may be found in Gilbert Highet's The

Classical Tradition.

Mario Untersteiner. The Sophists. New York:Philosophical Library, 1954. Pp. xvi, 368. \$6.00.

This is a translation of a work originally published in Turin in 1948. It deals at some length with Protagoras and Gorgias, and there are abbreviated sections on Prodicus, Antiphon, Hippias, the Dissoi logoi, and others. Untersteiner has brought together both the ancient texts and modern publications, mainly continental European. In some instances he offers corrections of defective texts.

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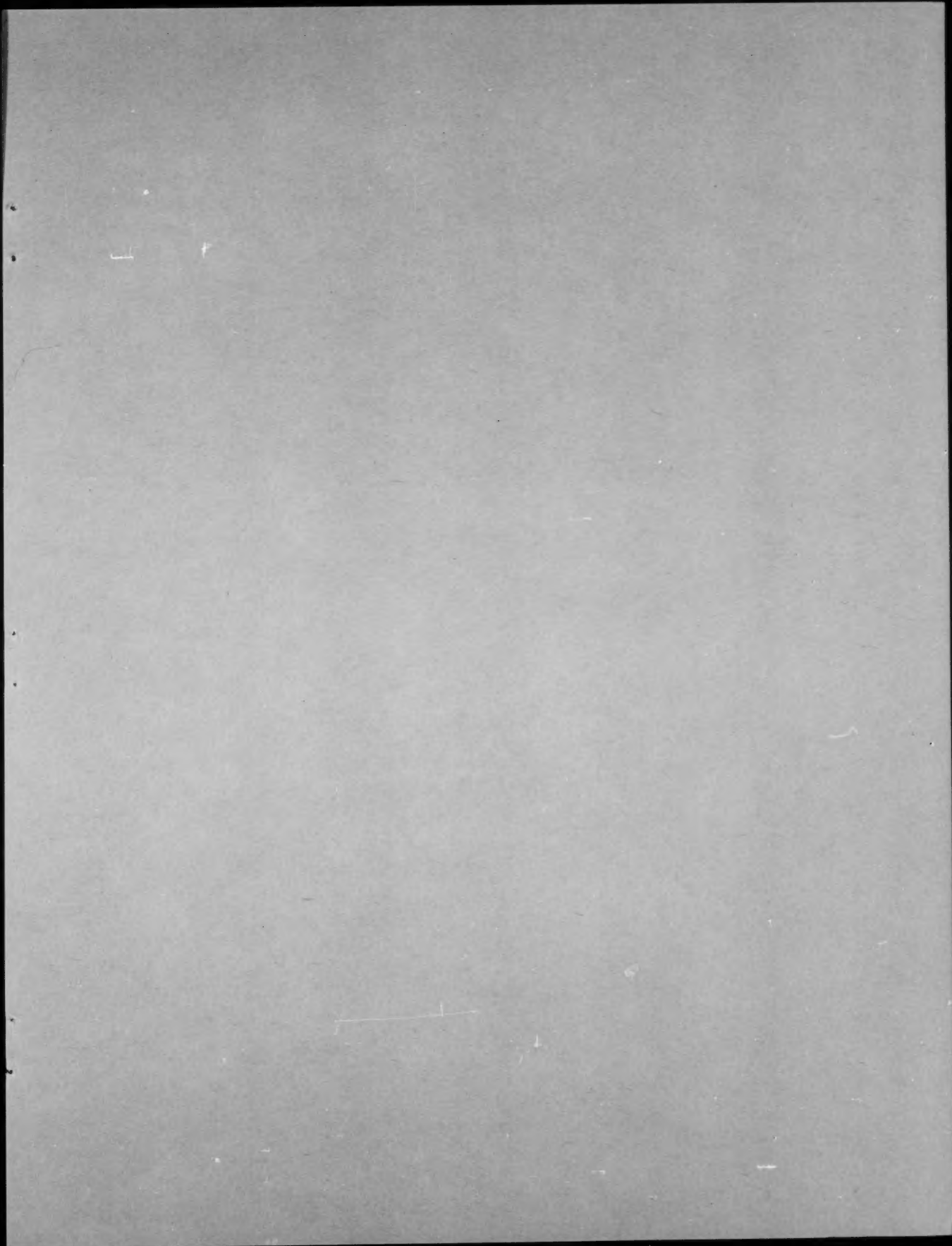
BOOKS RECEIVED

Barna M. Avré. A la Recherche du théâtre français. Hollywood: Nabor, 1956.

Léon Cellier. Gérard de Nerval: L'homme et l'oeuvre. Paris: Hatier-Boivin, 1956. (Connaissance des Lettres, 48). Pp. 256. 450 Frs.

René Pomeau. Beaumarchais: L'homme et l'oeuvre. Paris: Hatier-Boivin, 1956. (Connaissance des Lettres, 47). Pp. 207. 420 Frs.

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